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Qatar considering first municipal vote

DOHA (R) — Qatar's emir, Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifa Al Thani, said on Tuesday that Qatar was considering electing members of municipal councils, which would be the first vote by ballot in the country. The emir told the opening session of the country's advisory council that his administration was keen to increase citizens' involvement in government and economic development. "We are considering amendment of the laws relating to municipalities to have their membership by elections," he said. "If I have tended in my speech to you to concentrate on financial and economic issues as being the most urgent of other issues... this does not at all mean negligence of other issues... such as upgrading the government system." Qatar's advisory council debates laws and makes recommendations to the cabinet. It now has 30 members, nominated by the emir from Qatari citizens and tribes. Laws in Qatar are enacted by emiri decree. If the vote is decided, Qatar will become the second Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) country to have the vote.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تيمز يومية سياسية تصدر عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية. الراي.

Egyptian official gunned down in Geneva

GENEVA (AFP) — A murder inquiry was underway here Tuesday after an Egyptian trade official was shot dead by at least one gunman near his Geneva home, police said. Police identified the dead man as Aladdin Nazmi, 42, a trade councillor to the Egyptian U.N. mission. They said he was shot six times late Monday in the basement car park of his apartment building on the outskirts of the city. In Cairo, a Foreign Ministry official confirmed that the murdered man was a trade official. The justice ministry said Switzerland's chief prosecutor, Carla del Ponte, had gone to Geneva to head the inquiry. It was not known if Nazmi's assailant was acting alone. No one had claimed responsibility for the shooting by late on Tuesday, but Egypt's ambassador to Switzerland, Munir Zahran, did not rule out suggestions it was politically motivated. The media in Cairo have often accused Switzerland of providing asylum for Egyptian fundamentalists, a charge Swiss authorities have repeatedly denied.

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Shooting spree in Nablus; 4 injured

NABLUS (AFP) — Armed Palestinians shot and wounded four residents in the West Bank town of Nablus on Tuesday in broad daylight, witnesses told AFP. In the first shooting, 50-year-old lawyer Hosni Abu Rabah was bundled out of his office by a group of self-styled Fatah Hawks, the armed youth wing of the Fatah faction. He was taken to the main square and shot twice in the left leg. As he tried to escape, the Hawks fired again hitting passer-by Hussein Osama Ayad, 21, in the chest, witnesses said. Both were taken to the Rafidiya hospital where Abu Rabah was said to be in a comfortable condition and Mr. Ayad was good. In a separate shooting later Tuesday, shopkeeper Abed Al Karim Yariash, 62, received six bullets in both legs and the pelvis in an attack by Fatah Hawks in his shop in the Nablus bazaar. His son Majdi, 24, was shot in the thigh. Both were taken to Rafidiya hospital and were in a comfortable condition.

Arabs to lobby against transfer of U.S. embassy

CAIRO (AFP) — The Arab League is to lobby the United Nations against the U.S. Congress vote to transfer the American embassy to Jerusalem, league chief Esmat Abdul Meguid said Tuesday. "Arab countries are going to launch intensive action within the United Nations to oppose this decision before Nov. 29, when the U.N. general assembly will begin its (annual) discussions on Jerusalem," Dr. Abdul Meguid told reporters. The diplomatic offensive will be conducted by Arab members of the U.N. Security Council, members of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference and the Organisation of African Unity, and non-aligned countries.

30 settlers held for public disorder

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Some 30 Israeli settlers have been charged with taking part in illegal demonstrations and public order offences, a justice ministry spokesman said Tuesday. They are facing a total of 48 charges and went before the courts on Monday and Tuesday, he said. They are accused of disrupting public order and attacking Palestinians. Among them are several well known activists including Rabbi Moshe Levinger from Hebron, the founder of the ultra-nationalist movement "Bloc of Faith," and Nadia Matar, the leader of the "Women in Green" as well as the militants from the anti-Arab Kach movement. All were arrested during demonstrations against the Israeli military redeployment, but were released on bail. None are behind bars. Officially the cases are not linked to the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin by a Jewish fanatic on Nov. 4.

Court clears way for Priebe extradition

BUENOS AIRES (R) — Argentina's top court on Tuesday rejected the last legal bid by former SS Captain Erich Priebe to block his extradition to face trial for Italy's worst wartime atrocity. The supreme court, in a brief written ruling, dismissed an attempt by Mr. Priebe's attorney to annul the decision two weeks ago to send Priebe to Italy to be tried for crimes against humanity. "The request formulated is rejected completely," the court said. Priebe, 82, wanted for the massacre of 335 men and boys at the ardeatine caves outside Rome in March 1944. The victims, 75 of whom were Jews, were bound and shot in the back of the neck. Many were members of the Italian resistance.

No cabinet reshuffle before Parliament begins session

Sharif Zeid government committed to following King's directives, determined to put, through legal means, an end to 'unjust and unfair' attitude of peace opponents

By Ayman Al Safadi and Abdullah Hasanat
Jordan Times Staff Reporters

AMMAN — Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker has ruled out changes in the makeup of his cabinet before Parliament reconvenes in its third ordinary session in early December, saying that "a reshuffle is not on the cards at this point."

In an interview with the Jordan Times on Monday, the prime minister also rejected accusations that the government did not share with His Majesty King Hussein strong support and enthusiasm for the peace process with Israel.

"The government executes the policies of His Majesty and any talk of the government having a different view from His Majesty is complete nonsense," the prime minister said, adding that "no government would do that (differ with King Hussein) and certainly not my government."

We will execute His Majesty's orders to the best of our ability," Sharif Zeid said. But the prime minister

asserted that the government will gracefully accept any criticism that King Hussein has about the performance of the government, noting that the Monarch is "the leader of this country (who) has appointed this government and all other governments in Jordan since 1953."

The prime minister's assertion came in response to a question on whether King Hussein's address to senior military officials last week included criticism of the government.

"His Majesty has every right to criticise the performance of the government. He is the man who brought us to this position and he has the right to direct and criticise us. We accept this very gracefully," Sharif Zeid said in the interview which was conducted at his office.

In his speech, the King strongly criticised the performance of the official media and the privately-run press as well as the professional associations, saying that the Kingdom would no longer tolerate publications and actions that harm the



Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker

interests of the state. "We are going... to put an end to this unjust and unfair attitude, we are going to stop this nonsense," the prime minister said, explaining that some of the material that is published in the tabloid press "disturbs our brothers and allies in the Arab World and (some articles) talk about things that are below the standards of our Jordanian people... not characteristic of

Jordanians and not in our culture."

And even in the mainstream press, there are some negative articles that "discredit the country," he said. "This is unfair to Jordan as such." The prime minister attributed the anger that was clear in the King's speech to concern by His Majesty for the country and not in response to articles written about him personally.

"(The King) was not talking about himself because nobody ever says anything against him as a person... thank God for that, he has so much respect," said Sharif Zeid stressing that any action the government might take to curb excesses in the press would conform with the democratic orientation of the country and through the constitutional framework.

He said the government will amend the Press and Publications Law as well as legislation governing the work of professional associations but no decision has been reached yet on the nature of

(Continued on page 7)



His Majesty King Hussein with Etan Haper (centre), director of the office of the late Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, and Israeli Ambassador Shimon Shamir at the Royal Palace on Tuesday (Petra photo)

King reaffirms resolve to pursue quest for peace

HM accepts gifts from Rabin, Peres, pays tribute to late premier, pledges all support for his successor

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein on Tuesday reaffirmed his resolve to continue his quest for peace, security and stability in the Middle East and paid a glorious tribute to late Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, describing the death of Mr. Rabin as a personal loss.

The King's comments came during a meeting he had with the director of Mr. Rabin's office, Etan Haper, and the Israeli ambassador to Jordan, Shimon Shamir, who called on him to congratulate him on his 60th birthday. Mr. Haper presented a gift from the family of Mr. Rabin to the King and Mr. Shamir presented another gift from

acting Prime Minister Shimon Peres in appreciation of his efforts for peace, security and stability in the region. The King thanked the Israeli government and people and reaffirmed Jordan's commitment to support the peace efforts and achieve the aspirations of the people in the region.

He thanked the Rabin family and paid tribute to the late prime minister as a man who brought about historic changes in the Middle East. He also praised Leah Rabin, the prime minister's widow, for her efforts in pursuing the path of peace her husband had adopted.

Presenting the gift to the King, Mr. Haper said Mr. Rabin had planned to present it himself to the Monarch. He said: "Your Majesty,

two weeks ago Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin asked me what gift would you give the King for his 60th birthday. There was a suggestion for a pearl of dune bodies but the prime minister dismissed the idea because he thought maybe it is too dangerous for the Queen and for the King. As an alternative it was suggested that we travel with the Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra to Amman to play and sing happy birthday to Prime Minister Rabin thought that was overdoing it a bit. So in some way we found a compromise.

"Your Majesty, presents do not cry but the presenters are permitted to cry. This present may not be the most

(Continued on page 7)

Israel will complete pullback on schedule

Combined agency dispatches

ACTING PRIME Minister Shimon Peres promised on Tuesday Israel would meet the deadlines for handing over West Bank lands, to Palestinian self-rule, fulfilling the legacy of slain leader Yitzhak Rabin.

Mr. Peres then visited the Organisation (PLO) liaison office near Jenin, which on Monday became the first West Bank city handed over to Palestinians under a peace deal signed by Mr. Rabin in September, an Israeli official said.

A Jewish militant opposed to Israeli land-for-peace deals killed Mr. Rabin in Tel Aviv on Nov. 4. Speaking to CNN International, Mr. Peres said that in a phone call to PLO head Yasser Arafat the day after Mr. Rabin's murder: "I told him that we are going to continue the policy. We don't

intend to postpone any promise."

Jenin, occupied by Israeli troops along with the rest of the West Bank 28 years ago, was the first city to be turned over to the PLO since Israel's handover of the Gaza Strip and Jericho last year under a breakthrough peace deal.

"Peres said he was 'by and large' happy with the Jenin handover implemented 'six days ahead of our promise.' Israeli troops will leave five other cities and part of Hebron in coming months.

Mr. Peres was expected to receive approval to form a new government after President Ezer Weizman consulted all parliamentary factions on Tuesday and Wednesday.

"You know, we saw the celebrations and the happiness of the Palestinians in Jenin. Should their happiness make us sad? No, I think on the contrary," Mr. Peres said.

"They're entitled to be happy and we are entitled to be content because they are happy. Their happiness is not our problem. It is our promise," he said.

Amid tight security, Mr. Peres, accompanied by Police Minister Moshe Shahal, first visited the offices of the joint Israeli-Palestinian coordination team outside Jenin.

Then by helicopter he flew to a military base near Qalqilya in the West Bank about 15 kilometres east of Tel Aviv. The base will house the coordinating committee offices with the Palestinians.

"Yesterday we have concluded the first chapter of the redeployment in the West Bank," he said, praising the Israeli military and police for the job they had done despite "political and security problems."

"It was done as it should be and in time to allow the

(Continued on page 7)

Baqoura crossing closed temporarily

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan on Tuesday confirmed an Israeli report that a crossing point between the two countries had been temporarily closed following the arrest of three Israeli Arabs for smuggling weapons from Jordan.

According to Lieutenant General Tahseen Shurdum, deputy army commander for intelligence, the crossing point at Baqoura in the north of Jordan was closed early this week and one Jordanian was held for questioning.

"We will not allow anyone to endanger our security," Lt-Gen. Shurdum told the Jordan Times. He said the closure would end once new security arrangements were worked out between the Israeli and Jordanian authorities to ensure that no such incidents would be possible.

Baqoura is an 830-dunum piece of Jordanian land that is being cultivated by Israeli farmers who cross into the area regularly in accordance with the terms of the peace treaty signed between Jordan and Israel last year.

A Reuters report from Tel Aviv quoted Israeli police as saying the crossing will be closed while it investigates two incidents, one involving

(Continued on page 7)

Saudis tighten security, investigate Riyadh blast

Combined agency dispatches

SAUDI AUTHORITIES on Tuesday deployed security forces around foreign housing compounds as they searched for suspects in a car bombing which killed six people at U.S. military offices here.

A Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) team sent from the United States was due to arrive later in the day to join the investigation into Monday's blast, which ripped through offices used by U.S. military officials to train the Saudi national guard.

King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, at the weekly cabinet on Monday, urged security services to be more vigilant and "to intensify their investigations into who committed this criminal act."

Saudi National Guardsmen and policemen were seen on Tuesday posted at the entrances to compounds where Americans, British and other

Westerners live in the capital, while police cars patrolled the streets.

U.S. embassy spokesman Samir Kuttub said the Saudis had "heightened security for Americans" and hailed their efforts to find the perpetrators. "They're really working very hard on this issue."

An Indian wounded in the explosion died on Tuesday, the U.S. embassy said. The embassy said the Indian, like five Americans who died in Monday's blast, was employed at the centre. Saudi Arabia has also reported the death of a Filipino.

Saudi Arabia papers said it was just a matter of time before the security services found the perpetrators that attacked the Office of the programme manager for the Saudi Arabian National Guard.

U.S. military officials were seen removing files and furniture from the devastated

building and loading them into trucks. The area was roped off to the public.

One of the five Americans killed was a non-commissioned officer, while the other four were civilians. U.S. military officials were making arrangements to fly the bodies of the five Americans home.

A total of 37 other Americans were injured in the blast, including 24 who remained in hospitals on Tuesday morning. Two of the injured were in critical condition.

The estimated 35,000 Americans in Saudi Arabia have been warned by the embassy to "be extremely cautious."

In Washington, a senior Pentagon official who asked not to be named said a small van exploded outside the building at a time when many people were eating lunch.

(Continued on page 7)

Peres poised to take reins of government

Combined agency dispatches

ISRAELI PRESIDENT Ezer Weizman held talks with right-wing opposition and other party leaders here Tuesday in preparation for asking Shimon Peres to form a new government adopting the mantle of his slain predecessor Yitzhak Rabin.

"Never in the history of our country has the result of these talks been so clear," said Israeli political commentator Daniel Ben Simon.

After meeting with representatives from the 10 groups, Mr. Weizman was due to ask acting Prime Minister Peres to form a new government.

Late Monday the ruling Labour Party appointed Mr. Peres as its new leader and endorsed him as their candidate for the premiership, following Mr. Rabin's assassination on Nov. 4.

Mr. Weizman met with a Labour delegation and representatives from the right-wing opposition Likud Party led by Benjamin Netanyahu which has 32 deputies in the Knesset or parliament.

"We have recommended Peres, not because we support his policies, but because the assassination of a prime minister cannot direct political life in this country," Mr. Netanyahu told journalists after his talks with the president.

Only the extreme right-wing Molechet Party, which has just three deputies, opposed Mr. Peres' nomination.

"The assassination of Yitzhak Rabin... is no reason to have short memories and forget what the government did that he led with Shimon Peres," said Molechet party leader and retired general Rehavam Zeevi.

The coalition government comprises 44 Labour deputies, 12 from the left-wing Meretz Party and two right-wing defectors, and counts on the support of five Israeli Arabs, making a total of 63 out of the 120-seat Knesset.

So far the small religious parties have rejected overtures from Mr. Peres to join the coalition.

Mr. Peres, 72, has also played his cards close, refus-

ing to reveal the eventual line-up of his cabinet, once he is appointed. The powerful trade union body Histadrut, Haim Ramon, has already announced his return to the Labour fold, and it is known that he is hoping for the post of interior minister "with enlarged powers" in the peace process.

There are three possible scenarios, experts said: — Mr. Peres becomes prime minister, keeps his brief as foreign minister and names outgoing interior minister and a former chief of staff Ehud Barak to defence.

— Mr. Peres delegates foreign affairs to Yossi Beilin, a Labour dove and initiator of the peace process, while Mr. Barak becomes defence minister.

— Mr. Peres follows Rabin's example keeping the premiership and defence, and appoints Mr. Barak foreign minister.

The political expert of Israeli military radio said the third scenario was the most likely as Mr. Peres has appeared to hint at this.

Iraq may accept U.N. oil sale offer if its terms are changed

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Iraq said on Tuesday it would accept a United Nations offer allowing it partial oil sales if conditions which it considered violations of its sovereignty were revised.

The government newspaper Al Jumhuriya said that if members of the U.N. Security Council were concerned about the suffering of the Iraqi people, they should soften conditions attached to the sales instead of pressuring Iraq into accepting them.

It said there was no way for Iraq to endorse the terms in their present shape even if had to wait for five more years for the oil embargo to be removed.

"Why do not they (Security Council members) reconsider the offer and remove from it what touches on

Iraq's independence and all that meddles in its internal affairs?" the paper asked. "It is not possible to accept Resolution 986 in its present intrusive form," the paper added.

Iraq has been under pressure to accept U.N. Resolution 986 allowing it to sell up to \$2 billion worth of oil over six months in order to be able to purchase humanitarian supplies.

The pressure built up when the August defection of Lieutenant-General Hussein Kamel to Jordan forced the government to make revelations of weapons programmes which U.N. arms inspectors say could take a long time to probe.

Sanctions on Iraq, including a ban on its oil exports, could be removed when the

inspectors testify to the Security Council that Baghdad has come clean on all weapons banned under the 1991 Gulf war ceasefire terms.

The press has highlighted Iraq's case on oil sales, reacting to calls by other countries urging Baghdad to accept the terms — an indication many here took to mean that Baghdad could change attitude.

Baghdad-based diplomats say Iraq, while not rejecting the notion of selling any amounts of oil to pay for urgent needs, was lobbying to have some of the tough conditions the U.N. set for the sales reconsidered or removed.

Al Jumhuriya's commentary echoed a statement by Foreign Minister Mohammad Al Sahaf last week,

Washington shut down in budget row

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The U.S. government wound down non-essential operations for lack of funds Tuesday as the White House and Congress remained deadlocked over how to balance the federal budget.

Hundreds of thousands of "non-essential" workers were being sent home without pay while national zoos, parks and museums were closed.

Officials estimated that 800,000 workers, more than one-third of the 2.1 million federal workforce, would be furloughed.

A memo issued by Budget Director Alice Rivlin at the start of business Tuesday told agency chiefs to "implement the close-down of affected operations promptly and in an orderly manner."

Four in the race for presidency in Algeria elections

Agence France Presse

ALGERIAN PRESIDENT Liamine Zoual, an austere and reserved retired general, is seeking election on Thursday in his country's first multi-party presidential poll since independence in 1962.

Mr. Zoual, appointed president in January last year, is the hot favourite to win a campaign dominated by each of the four candidates' plans to end the civil war that has left between 30,000 and 50,000 dead since it began in 1992.

The incumbent, 54, who has swung between seeking reconciliation and confrontation with the country's armed Islamic opposition, has presented himself as an independent candidate in the run-up to the first round of voting.

He is backed, however, by military hardliners who brought in a state of emergency after quashing the second round of an election that the fundamentalist Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was poised to win in January 1992.

Named as president for a transition period of three years on January 30, 1994 by the military-backed High Council of State, he pledged in October last year to hold elections by the end of this year.

Mr. Zoual has said he hopes the presidential race, and legislative and municipal elections due to follow, will be a break with the past that will allow a new generation of leaders to come to power in Algeria.

His chances of victory have been enhanced but his hopes of national reconciliation dented by a boycott of the poll by the main Islamic opposition parties allied to the banned FIS.

Born in Batna in the Aurès mountains, Mr. Zoual is a "pure" product of the Algerian military. He began his career as a soldier serving in the National Liberation Army (ALN) fighting to evict the colonial power France between 1954 and 1962.

Long a supporter of a professional army, he commanded three military regions during his long career: Tamanrasset in the south in 1982, Bechar on the Moroccan border in 1984, and Constantine in the east in 1987.

Nahnah — moderate face
Mahfoud Nahnah, leader of Islamic Society Movement (MSI-HAMAS), is the candidate whose politics are closest to those of the FIS.

Mr. Nahnah, 53, a former Arabic language teacher, is the moderate face of Algerian Islamic extremism.

He sees the presidential election as a chance to stop the "spiral of violence and hatred" that has left more than 30,000 dead since 1992.

The MSI-HAMAS, which recruits among the middle class, is the second most important fundamentalist party after the FIS but only polled 4.71 per cent in the first round of the quashed December 1991 legislative elections.

Sheikh Nahnah believes in a modern and tolerant Islam and a positive coexist-

ence between all political movements but has vowed not to sit down at the conference table with "those who come with a Khalashnikov."

Armed militants have threatened to kill him but he is equally mistrusted by more moderate politicians who have accused him of wanting the same objective ultimately as the FIS: a hardline Islamic state.

'Act of resistance'

Said Sadi, leader of the Rally for Culture and Democracy (RCD), has described his candidature as an act of resistance.

The 48-year-old psychiatrist is the most secular of all the candidates and the one most hostile to Islamic extremism, whose exponents, he has said, oppose democracy and should be excluded from it.

Mr. Sadi has led his party since 1989 but has been in politics much longer. He was one of the main leaders of the militant movement that campaigned for improved rights for the country's Berbers between 1960 and 1970.

Since then he has become a leader of the "democratic movement" and has denounced the former one-party state "33 years of waste" followed by "an unspeakable fundamentalist barbarism."

Born in Aghribs in the Kabylie mountains, he was one of those who called for the cancellation of the second round of voting in the legislative elections in January 1992.

Mr. Sadi, who also chairs the Movement for the Republic (MPR), has called for the creation of self-defence groups to oppose Muslim militants.

The RCD won 2.56 per cent of the vote in the first round of the legislative election in December 1991.

'Worst' candidate

Nouredine Boukrouh, leader of the Algerian Renewal Party (PRA), is the youngest candidate and is widely regarded as the clear outsider in the presidential election.

Mr. Boukrouh, 45, has presented himself as the candidate of reconstruction and reconciliation, but is perhaps best remembered for calling himself "the least worst" of the four presidential hopefuls.

Born in Al Milia in eastern Algeria, he is a former civil servant who became a manager of national enterprises that were privatised, going on to run a biological products manufacturing company.

A father of five and an army reserve officer, he has declared himself a disciple of Malek Bennabi's philosophy of Algerian nationalism founded on a modern and progressive Islam.

Mr. Boukrouh wrote a celebrated attack on the bureaucrats and rentier class of the former one-party state and has since concentrated on campaigning against armed militants using violence to try to bring down the government.

The PRA won only 0.86 per cent of the vote in the first round of elections in December 1991.



An Algerian woman signs up for her voter card in an Algiers neighbourhood said to be a stronghold of militants who oppose the Nov. 16 presidential elections (AFP photo)

Precious artefacts found in Egyptian prison

CAIRO (AFP) — A trove of priceless ancient artefacts was discovered in a cell block housing hardcore murderers and thieves at one of Egypt's highest security prisons, the daily Al-Ahram said.

The pieces from Egypt's pharaonic, Greco-Roman and Islamic eras had sat for years at the entrance of cell block two in Liman Al Turah prison until they were noticed by a prison inspector, the daily said.

Prisoners digging the foundations for a reception for the prison, south of Cairo, unearthed them and, not realising their value, set them aside prison officials said, the paper reported in its early edition on Tuesday.

Cell block two houses prisoners serving long terms for murder or theft, the paper added. The pieces included a trio of stone statues dating back to the pharaonic Ancient Empire, the top of a Greek column, two Greek vases carved with depictions of Greek myths and an undated statuette of a nude woman.

Also among them was a stone bust of Mamluk noble, most probably Ali Bek 'Al Kabir, and a prayer podium, most probably from the Ben Tulun Mosque, one of Cairo's oldest mosques dating back to 879 AD.

The inspector, Sayed Abdul Halim, told the paper he recognised the pieces might be valuable because he had once worked in the antiquities police.

The artefacts were handed over to the Supreme Antiquities Council for examination, the paper said. Liman Al Turah, which also holds prisoners involved in militant violence, is built near Misr Al Qadima, the original site where Cairo was built over a millennium ago.

Israel may compensate Egypt for PoW massacres — official

CAIRO (Agencies) — Israel has told Egypt it will look into reports that Israeli army officers executed Egyptian prisoners of war (PoWs) in the Arab-Israeli wars of 1956 and 1967 and has said it is ready to compensate for the deaths, an Egyptian official said.

Adel Al Safi, first deputy foreign minister, said in the government newspaper Al-Ahram on Tuesday that Egypt would never allow the issue to go unresolved.

Former Israeli officers and historians shocked Egyptians when they revealed earlier this year that they either witnessed or took part in the execution of Egyptian PoWs during the two wars.

The two countries failed to end the dispute in a meeting in Cairo in September but Mr. Safi said contacts had continued and that Egyptian and Israeli officials discussed the issue during the Middle East and North Africa economic summit in Amman in October.

"The Israelis said they would look into the issue, whereas before they refused to even open it and they also said they were ready to pay compensation. Therefore there are indications of progress in the issue," Mr. Safi told Al-Ahram.

"Let us hope that this will not take a long time. All I can say is Egypt will not forget this issue and will continue to bring it up until we find an acceptable resolution," he added.

Islamists and leftist opposition groups in Egypt have pressed the government to cut relations with Israel over the PoW allegations and have criticised the state for not taking enough action against Israel.

The opposition has also used the issue to back their stand against peace and normalisation with the Jewish state.

Egypt became the first Arab country to sign a peace treaty with Israel in 1979 but relations at the popular level remain cold.

Mr. Safi said his country was ready to investigate Israeli allegations that Egyptian troops committed crimes on the other side of the battle lines during the 1973 war if Israel presented proof.

"Egypt is ready to carry out an investigation but on the condition that proof is given and not just allegations. There is clear-cut proof for our case (against Israel)... there are recorded and published confessions by the perpetrators of these massacres," Mr. Safi said.

He said it was too early to consider taking the case to international organisations because negotiations were ongoing with Israel.

An Israeli historian brought to light in August the massacre of around 900 Egyptians who had laid down their guns during the 1956 Suez campaign and the June 1967 Middle East war.

Abu Dhabi (AFP) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has become alarmed by a surge in the number of Asian illegal immigrants arriving in the oil-rich Gulf state in search of jobs.

Police have reported a spate of mass infiltrations by Pakistanis and other Asians crossing the narrow Gulf from Iran over the past few weeks despite intensified measures to curb the influx.

The surge prompted fresh calls for coordination with Iran and neighbouring Oman, where a large number of illegal immigrants were reported to have landed before crossing into the nearby mountainous boundaries of the UAE.

"Such a phenomenon has become extremely worrying and requires a revision of the measures to monitor the land borders," said Sheikh Taleb bin Saqr Al Qassimi, police chief in the northern emirate of Ras Al Khaimah.

Police have had to use aircraft to chase illegal immigrants in the mountains while the coast guard has been bolstered to intercept suspect vessels.

Official statistics showed more than 2,000 Iranians, Pakistanis, Afghans and Indians have been seized this year while trying to sneak into the UAE, which has one of the highest per capita incomes in the world.

Around 300 of them were captured over the past few weeks in Ras Al Khaimah and Fujairah and police said the surge in such attempts was because of the fine weather and calm seas during this period of the year.

Officials said the intruders, who had exceeded 25,000 since 1975, had come across the Gulf from Iran, where boat owners charge large sums of money for their transport.

"The continued influx of Asian immigrants has become a security threat to the UAE and this requires urgent measures to deal with the phenomenon," said Abdullah Abu Zaid, security chief at Ras Al Khaimah police.

"Most of those arrested have admitted they had come from the shores of a neighbouring country," he added, in an apparent reference to Iran. "This underscores the need for a sort of coordination with neighbouring countries."

Officials have blamed the UAE's proximity to Iran, the presence of a large Asian community in the emirates, and the lack of tight security measures at the shore, one of the longest coastlines in the region.

Iranians, Pakistanis and Indians account for nearly 40 per cent of the UAE's population of around 2.2 million.

Authorities are particularly concerned over illegal immigration on the grounds many of those who succeed in sneaking in become involved in crime after they fail to find jobs. They noted most of those arrested in connection with drug offences in the past decade were Pakistanis and other Asians.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Rabin's widow says she wants active role

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The widow of assassinated Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said she wanted to come out of mourning and take an active role in public life. In an interview published on Tuesday, Leah Rabin, 68, told the daily Yedioth Aharonot: "We are in mourning for my husband, our friend, father and grandfather. But this huge wave of sympathy is also sweeping us towards joining this mass of people, breaking off from our family mourning to become active again." Israeli commentators have hinted that Mrs. Rabin may be asked by her supporters to follow her husband into politics. She did not dismiss the idea out of hand, telling the newspaper that she was not in a position to "make plans at the moment." Since the murder of her husband, Leah Rabin has strongly criticised opposition right-wing leader Benjamin Netanyahu for failing to rein in his extremist supporters, and has urged the government to follow Mr. Rabin's peace policy.

Israeli leaders lose patience with security

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli politicians lost patience Tuesday with the strict security measures imposed on them since the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. "I hope the measures won't last much longer," said Justice Minister David Levi. "I understand that we are all still in shock, but the agents in charge of our security must restrain themselves," he told state radio. Since Rabin's murder on Nov. 4, cabinet ministers and some Labour leaders have been forced to wear bullet-proof vests and have been assigned extra body guards. Acting Prime Minister Shimon Peres wore a vest on Sunday when he retraced his steps to the Tel Aviv square where Mr. Rabin was shot by a Jewish fanatic to attend a huge memorial for the slain leader. Had Mr. Rabin been wearing one of the Israeli-made, light vests in would have saved his life, police said. Labour Party Secretary General Nissim Zivili, said he understood "the remorse and anguish of the security services, but they have to compromise. We can't carry on like this for our contact with the people is being hampered."

Girl soldier thrown off base for hailing murder

TEL AVIV (AFP) — An Israeli woman soldier has been expelled from two West Bank bases for openly rejoicing at the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. Israel Radio reported Tuesday. The soldier was first asked to leave a base near Tulkarem after praising the Jewish fanatic who gunned down Mr. Rabin at a peace rally on Nov. 4 in Tel Aviv. She then moved to a base near Nablus, but was once more expelled for the same reason. Her name and rank were not revealed in the report, which an army spokesman told AFP he was checking. Since then the soldier has been stationed in another West Bank base, the radio's military correspondent said without stating where. According to the radio, she comes from a settler family on the West Bank who said she had been misunderstood. Israeli women have to do two years military service, and men three.

Arms dealers arrested in south Egypt

CAIRO (AFP) — Police arrested 12 weapons dealers on Monday for selling arms to Muslim militants in the south Egyptian province of Assiut, police sources said. Police netted the dealers in raids in several towns in the province, 380 kilometres south of Cairo, uncovering a total of 21 machine guns, 15 rifles, four hand grenades and 2,000 rounds of ammunition, the sources said. They also found a number of other explosives and 15 triggering mechanisms in the dealers' homes, they said. The arms merchants had specialised in sales to criminals and Muslim militants waging a violent campaign against the state that has left over 900 dead since March 1992, police said.

Bundestag's vote 'obvious mistake' — Iran

BONN (AFP) — The German parliament's vote to disavow Iran's Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati from a state-sponsored conference on "Europe and Islam" this week in Bonn was "an obvious mistake," Iran's embassy here said Monday in a communique. "We believe that the settling of political or personal accounts should not compromise the objectives of rapprochement between the Islamic world and Europe," the communique said. "If the Bundestag (Germany's lower house of parliament) finds that the declarations of Iran's president constitute an incitement to terrorism, it is an obvious mistake." Originally scheduled for Nov. 15-16, the meeting has been postponed after the Bundestag disavowed German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel who organised the conference. Besides Mr. Velayati, the foreign ministers of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Egypt, Italy, Morocco, Pakistan, Tunisia and Turkey were to participate along with 300 or so experts.

Spain calls for ratification of EU-Turkey accord

MADRID (AFP) — Spain, which currently chairs the European Union (EU), urged the European Parliament to ratify a free trade agreement between Turkey and the EU. Speaking after talks with his Turkish counterpart Demis Baykal, Spanish Foreign Minister Javier Solana said Madrid and the other EU governments were in favour of ratifying the accord. Mr. Solana said Turkey had "an extremely important role in regional stability" and that it would be a "big mistake" for the European Parliament not to ratify the customs union agreement. The deal was signed in Brussels in March but must be approved by the European Parliament. A vote is expected in December, but the legislature could put it off because of concerns over Turkey's human rights record, especially its treatment of the minority Kurds.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 77311-19

PROGRAMME TWO
14:00 People
14:55 The Rona Lucas Show
15:20 Lisa Mirelli (live)
16:00 Foreigners in Concert
17:00 Fractals
17:30 Jeux
18:00 News in French
19:15 Magazine — Sports Et Musique
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 Feature film: "Outrageous Fortune"
21:30 Doc. — Facts About Jordan
22:00 News in English
22:25 Feature film: "Top Gun"
23:59 Grace Under Fire

PRAYER TIMES

04:39 Fajr
05:59 (Sunrise) Dhuhr
11:20 News in English
14:16 Asr
16:41 Maghrib
18:01 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swettenham, Tel. 810740
Assembly of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590.

Church of the Annunciation Tel.

677440.
Dr. In Salla Church Tel. 661757
Terrence Church Tel. 622666
The Church of the Annunciation Tel. 622541.
Anglican Church Tel. 630851. Tel. 622543.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.
Armenian International Church Tel. 625226.
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328.
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691.
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
Temperatures are expected to rise becoming around average with temperatures southeasterly moderate. In Amman, winds will be northerly active and seas calm.

Min/Max. temp. 3/21
Amman 11/25
Aqaba

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Deserts 1/22
Jordan Valley 9/25

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 19 Aqaba 24. Humidity readings: Amman 21 per cent. Aqaba 29 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Nidal Al As'ad 751872
Dr. Yousef Al Faqih 780104
Dr. Mazen Nsheli 830435
Dr. Abdul Rahim Mustafa 744685
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdows pharmacy 778336
Al Asema pharmacy 657055
Nairoukh pharmacy 626672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shamsani pharmacy 637660
Nairoukh pharmacy 623672
Najeh pharmacy 847632

IRBID:

Dr. Mohammed Al Khalili 273099
Al Ouds pharmacy (—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Tarq Hijawi 985445
Khalifah pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Emergency 630341
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 671011
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 658000
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints 897467
Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone 630321
Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/332

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
08:00 Aqaba (RJ)
08:30 Jeddah (RJ)
08:55 Larnaca (RJ)
11:00 Doha, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
09:00 Damascus (RJ)
13:30 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
16:40 Istanbul (RJ)
16:45 Frankfurt (RJ)
17:00 Paris (RJ)
17:55 Toronto, Montreal (RJ)
18:00 Madrid, Geneva (RJ)
18:05 Brussels, Vienna (RJ)
18:25 London, Berlin (RJ)
19:05 Rome (RJ)
22:45 Aqaba (RJ)
23:20 Beirut (RJ)
06:10 Cairo (RJ)

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by

ROYAL JORDANIAN (RJ) INFORMATION

department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (06)52306-5, where it should always be verified.

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
08:30 Aqaba (RJ)
18:15 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
18:35 Berlin, London (RJ)
19:00 Rome (RJ)
11:15 Istanbul (RJ)
19:10 Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
19:10 Colombo (RJ)
19:35 Beirut (RJ)
20:05 Riyadh, Dhahran (RJ)
20:15 Aqaba (RJ)
20:25 New Delhi (RJ)
21:10 Cairo (RJ)
21:15 Calcutta, Bangkok (RJ)
22:25 Sharjah (RJ)
22:45 San'a (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

07:45 Beirut (ME)
09:15 London (RJ)
10:40 Cairo (MS)
13:25 Jeddah (SV)
15:20 Karachi (PK)
21:00 San'a (Y)
21:00 Larnaca (CY)
02:00 Amsterdam (KL)
03:00 Athens (OA)

HIJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman 8:00 a.m. every Monday
Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upptower price in fils per kg.

Apple 700
Banana 600
Banana (Mukammal) 620
Cabbage 170
Carrot 270
Cauliflower 140
Cucumbers (large) 220
Cucumbers (small) 400
Eggplant 150
Garlic 750
Grape 600
Grape Fruit 140
Lemon 220
Marrow (large) 100
Marrow (small) 150
Olive (green) 500
Onion (green) 300
Orange (dry) 250
Orange 300
Pepper (hot) 100
Pepper (sweet) 100
Potato 300
Radish 300
Spinach 200
String Beans 200
Tomato 200
Tomato 200

Trade delegation to head for talks in Safages, Tunisia

AMMAN (J.T.) — A trade delegation led by Haidar Murad, chairman of the Amman Chamber of Commerce, will Wednesday start an official visit to Tunisia at the invitation of that country's chambers of industry and trade.



Haidar Murad

In a statement on the eve of the visit, Mr. Murad said that his delegation will hold talks on economic and trade cooperation between Tunisia and Jordan with several Tunisian ministers and the chairman of the Federation of Chambers of Industry and Trade.

The delegation is scheduled also to visit several factories, investment projects and tourist sites to witness the Tunisian experience in various areas.

According to Mr. Murad, the delegation will also take part in celebrations marking the 100th anniversary of the Chamber of Trade and Industry in the city of Safages in southern

last April.

Mr. Murad said that discussions during the visit will focus on means of increasing the volume of trade and on working out a mechanism for cooperation in trade and economic affairs between the private sectors of the two countries.

Mr. Murad said that his delegation was expected to sign a protocol with the Safages Chamber of Industry and Trade during the visit.

The protocol will define areas for cooperation, the exchange of information and business delegations and organising trade fairs to promote the sale of national goods to either country.

During the April meeting in Tunisia, the two sides signed agreements on bilateral cooperation in agriculture, trade, industry, transport and tourism.

Analysts see political parties as 'accepting compromises'

By Lola Keilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Political parties, even the "most radical" among them, have failed in addressing important political changes, and accepted compromises which the "conservatives" of the 1950's would not have accepted, according to three political analysts.

In a seminar, hosted by the International and Islamic Centre for Research and Information (IICRI), and entitled "Political Parties after Three Years of Legislation" former member of the Muslim Brotherhood Ziad Abu Ghanimeh, described the experience of the political parties as "frustrating" and that they had failed in leaving a significant impact on the "so-called" democratic process in the Kingdom.

"Islamic parties are absent from the arena by eschewing the free will of their political leaders," Mr. Abu Ghanimeh said.

The power of Islamic parties is slowly diminishing, he said.

"In the old days before democracy these parties were like the ocean, unfortunately they are turning into a small pool," he added.

As for the centrist parties, the Ministry of Interior treats them as part of its counterparty institutions, Mr. Abu Ghanimeh said.

He added that the secretaries general are given the title of governor, district head, and community chief.

sarcastically. According to Mr. Abu Ghanimeh, leftist parties are "all talk and no action" and "bum like drones."

"Their political stands do not differ from any of the official stands of the Arab governments, for example, their position on the peace process," Mr. Abu Ghanimeh said.

Jordan needs a political institution, more than political parties, said Jamal Shaer, a former Baath party activist.

This institution would have a say in the political life such as appointing prime ministers, said Dr. Shaer, a former minister of health.

"The political parties in the parliament have no authority and they failed in taking effective measures to change or even leave a significant mark on the political life in the country," he said.

"Their loud screams are heard," he added, but they make no attempts to amend certain articles in the Constitution in order to increase the parliament's authority, Dr. Shaer said.

"The Jordanian Constitution in its present status is one of the worst constitutions in the world. Articles that were added to the Constitution in 1976 and 1957 should be reviewed," he said.

He disagreed with Mr. Abu Ghanimeh's description of the secretaries general of the centrist parties and the role Islamic parties can play in Jordanian political life.

"Centrist parties reflect the traditional institutions in Jordan," he said.

"And Islamic parties in the Kingdom are the largest political movement and do have influence," he said.

But he stressed the need for pluralism and democracy in Jordan, as the only path for development.

Abdullah Nakrashi, a political analyst, said political parties in Jordan are personalised, based on political "salons" and personal schools of thought, which have lost the characteristic of the political struggle of the 1950's.

"These parties are like those of the 1930's, in which the leader is a Pasha," Dr. Nakrashi said.

These parties, he said, operate from a mediator framework in order to market themselves in the country.

"Left, right and centre adopt the ideas of pan-Arabism and Islam, nothing distinguishes them from one another," Dr. Nakrashi said.

Membership in these parties is not attracted by political programmes or platforms but rather depends upon the charisma of the secretary general, he said.

Dr. Nakrashi added that as a result of the political experience in the last four decades, political parties in Jordan are being excluded from the political debate.

"Debate in Jordan is direct, between the leadership and the citizens, it does not go through political parties," he said.

The seminar was the last in a series in which 17 political party leaders participated in assessing their contribution to Jordanian public life, said Dr. Nazam Asaf, director of the IICRI.

Local groups mark King's birthday with parades

AMMAN (Petra) The Jordanian Society of Cardiac and Thoracic Surgery Tuesday organised a sponsored march under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Noor as part of the country's celebrations of His Majesty King Hussein's 60th birthday.

Deputising for the queen, HRH Prince Ra'ed Ben Zeid, the Chief Chamberlain, led the procession of students from the Al Hussein Sports City to the University of Jordan.

Another march was held under the patronage of Amman Mayor Mamdouh Abbadi and proceeded along some of Amman's main streets.

Dr. Abbadi said, in an address at the start of the march which kicked off from the Royal Cultural Centre, that the march is an expression of people's joy on the happy occasion of the King's birthday.

Representatives of various public and private organisations and large crowds who took part in the march carried posters, Jordanian flags and the King's portrait, and several folklore groups presented national songs along the marchers' route.

The march was organised by a local firm in cooperation with Amman Municipality.



Citizens Tuesday march through the streets of Amman in celebration of His Majesty King Hussein's 60th birthday (Petra photo)

Survey reveals men are in favour of women working

Majority of poll sample believe men should share in house chores

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Who said Jordanians do not like women to work?

According to a recent study, a clear majority of Jordanian men and women approve of women working before and after marriage.

Not only that, Jordanians, from all walks of life, also approved of men's participation in domestic work, the study said.

Seventy-two per cent of the sample, selected randomly from all parts of the Kingdom to sound out the public's perception towards women working and women's aspirations, showed great desire in seeing women involved in various vocations and taking part in activities outside the house.

Asked why they approved of women working, 83 per cent of the sample pointed to financial reasons.

But work as a means of promoting women's self-confidence and independence was approved of by only 33 of the males and 11 of the female respondents.

The majority of the sample favoured women working because of the benefits that come with the additional income.

In addition, a majority of the sample opted for certain vocations, such as education, weaving and nursing, as the best fields for a woman to enter.

Of the respondents 54 per cent said they would approve of women working if the work atmosphere was not mixed (i.e., male and female).

Also, only 19 per cent of the sample said women were able to work under the



Young women learn to sew at a vocational training establishment (File photo)

same conditions as men.

"It is not surprising," said Musa Shuteiwi, team leader of the research group that conducted the survey. "Jordanians approve of women working, but under certain conditions."

"It would not be surprising if we look at the same sample's reaction towards religion's stand vis-a-vis women's work and role in the society," he added.

"There is no contradiction, Jordanians believe, between religious teachings and women working."

On the contrary, 72.8 per

cent of the sample believe that religion encourages women to work.

Although the percentage of women who thought Islamic sharia does not stand in the way of women working was higher than the men questioned, with 78 per cent in comparison with 67 per cent of men, the overall assessment remains high, said Dr. Shuteiwi, a sociologist.

The study, conducted by the Ministry of Planning and funded by the United Nations Population Fund, were selected randomly to

represent Jordanian families from Amman, Zarqa, Balqa, Irbid, Ma'arra, Karak, Tafleh, and Ma'an.

It also represented different ages, both sexes and varied social and professional backgrounds.

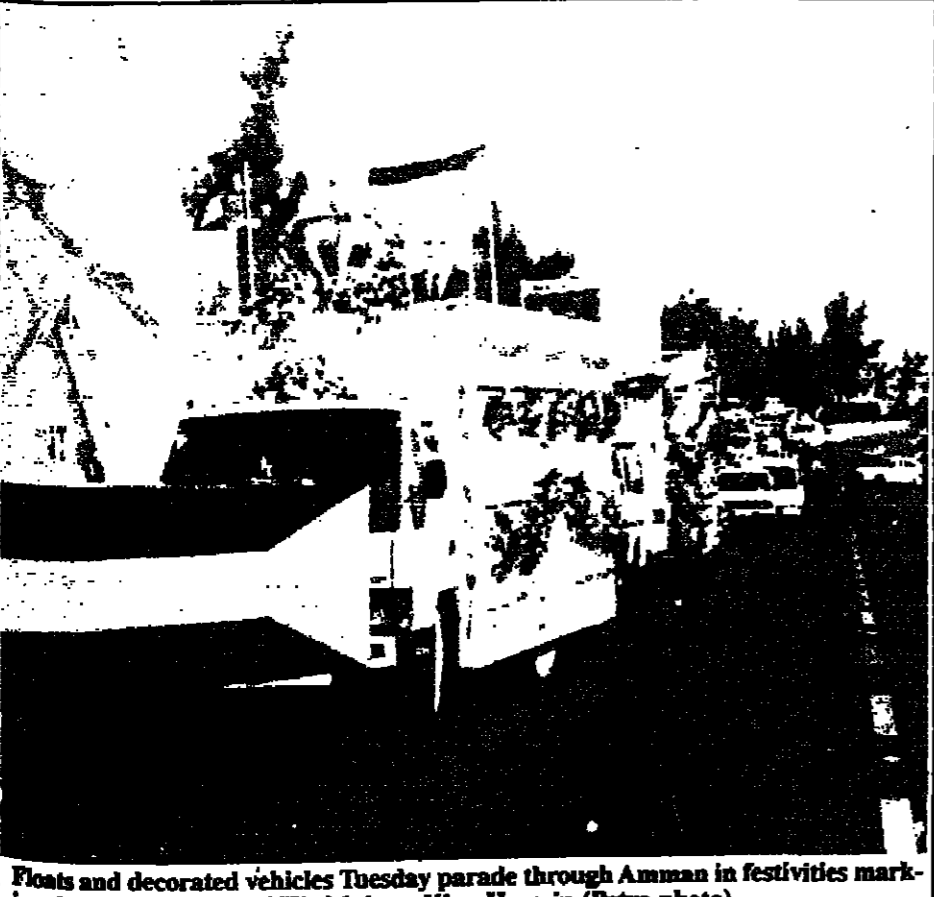
Although the sample showed that 76 per cent approve of women working, on 52 per cent approve of women working after having children.

A surprising result of the survey regarding Jordanian's perception of men helping out in domestic work. More than 70 per

cent of men and 77 per cent of women believe men should help out in household chores.

"Whether they actually do it or not is another story!" Dr. Shuteiwi said.

"It (men doing domestic chores) is not highly applicable in the Jordanian society because of the fact that most women do not work," he added. "And, women do not work because they are the first to be influenced by the high rate of unemployment. It is a vicious circle."



Floats and decorated vehicles Tuesday parade through Amman in festivities marking the 60th birthday of His Majesty King Hussein (Petra photo)

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILM
* "Four Weddings and a Funeral," at the British Council at 7:00 p.m.

BAZAAR
* Marking His Majesty King Hussein's 60th Birthday at the Social Institute for Orphan's Care, Bayadir Wadi Seer.

LECTURE
* (In Arabic) by Iraqi artist Ismail Fattah on his exhibition at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Luweibdeh at 5:30 p.m.
* "Max und Moritz" (in Arabic and German) by Mahdi Hammud and Dr. Dieter Glade at Schneller School at 7:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS
* U.N. photo exhibition on the occasion of the U.N.'s 50th anniversary

sary, "The U.N. through the eyes of its staff," at Abdul Hameed Shoman Gallery, Jabal Amman through Nov.23.
* Pakistani-made products at Al Bassam Hall, King Abdullah Gardens.

* Works by Jordanian and Iraqi artists at Orfali Art Gallery.
* Works by Akram Abdel Jabbar at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman.

* Works by Dodi Taba'a entitled "Variations Graphiques 93-95" at the French Cultural Centre.
* Sculptures & paintings by Iraqi Artist Ismail Fattah, and a retrospective exhibition of sculptures & drawings by Mona Saudi at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh

* Metal works by Ammar Khammash at Liwan, off Wadi Saqra Street. Also displaying all kinds of handicrafts. (Tel. 699141)

Nigeria gets no respite in row over executions

LAGOS (R) — Nigeria remained under siege Tuesday from the international community over its execution of nine minority rights activists including author Ken Saro-Wiwa.

More countries continued to recall their top diplomats from Lagos, the latest being Brazil and fellow OPEC member Venezuela, in protest at the hanging last Friday of the activists.

In tit-for-tat retaliation, Nigeria Monday recalled its ambassadors from abroad for similar action by many countries, including the United States and former colonial power Britain.

Saro-Wiwa and his associates were members of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni Peoples (MOSOP) and were sentenced over the murder of four chiefs in oil-producing Ogoniland.

Their execution drew worldwide anger and Nigeria was suspended from the Commonwealth.

which groups Britain and its former colonies.

In a statement from the capital Abuja Monday night, Nigeria's government said the suspension was at variance with the facts of the matter which led to it.

"Government is studying the full decisions of the Commonwealth heads of government and will respond appropriately in accordance with our national aspirations, interest, dignity and self-respect," said the statement issued by David Attah, the spokesman of military ruler General Sani Abacha.

"The government and people of Nigeria will patriotically confront this challenge to the course we have charted, for the full and unimpeded realisation of the programme."

Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation, has been in turmoil since 1993 when the army annulled the vote to restore democracy. Gen.

Abacha seized power in the anarchy that followed the annulment.

Last month, he announced a three-year transition programme for a return to civilian rule. The Commonwealth has demanded that he shows convincing evidence of restoring democracy within the next two years or Nigeria would be expelled from the association.

More trouble loomed for the west African nation Tuesday over the executions as the European Union scheduled an emergency session of its executive to discuss stronger sanctions against Nigeria.

Pressure groups and leading world figures like Archbishop Desmond Tutu continued to call for an embargo on Nigeria's crude oil, its economic backbone but this did not seem likely. Saro-Wiwa had led a campaign for self-determination for the 500,000-strong

Ogoni ethnic minority and to gain compensation from oil firms for environmental damage to their homeland for oil exploitation there by foreign oil companies since 1954.

The West had objected to the trial of the men by a special tribunal. But Nigeria countered that this procedure was not new.

Justice Minister and Attorney-General Michael Agbamuche said on state television that the West was applying double standards by demanding the death penalty for drug-related offences while condemning the death sentences on the Ogoni activists.

State television Monday also reported demonstrations it said had taken place in Akwa Ibom state in the south, Abuja and in Niger state in the north in support of Gen. Abacha's government.



French Prime Minister Alain Juppe gestures during the opening of a parliament debate on cutting France's huge welfare deficit (AFP photo)

French demonstrate against Juppe reforms

PARIS (AFP) — French workers planned nationwide demonstrations Tuesday to defend the debt-ridden social security system as Prime Minister Alain Juppe's plan to reform it came under flak from leaders of his conservative coalition.

As Juppe prepared to put the plan, full details of which have yet to be revealed, to a parliamentary vote of confidence Wednesday, the prime minister came under criticism from former Prime Minister Edouard Balladur and backers of the defeated presidential candidate.

Headed by their national trade union leaders, marches were to be staged in Paris and other big cities in a day of action to protest the reforms. In the Mediterranean port of Marseille, Marc Blondel, leader of the independent trade union Force Ouvriere, led a march of up to 6,000 people.

Mr. Blondel accused the government of planning to "break the system for the sake of book-keeping."

A strike call in the Paris Metro caused uneven disruption, with 75 per cent of services being provided, but the railway system was unaffected. The Eiffel Tower opened late to visitors after a one-hour strike by staff.

Ferry sailings to the Mediterranean Island of Corsica and local train and

bus services were disrupted in Marseille although high-speed TGV trains ran normally.

There were some delays in flights at several airports, including Orly, south of Paris, after management reduced air control capacity as a precaution. But air controllers worked normally and the delays were expected to be made up.

Trade unions went ahead with the day of action despite receiving assurances from Labour and Social Affairs Minister Jacques Barrot during talks over the weekend that some drastic measures had been dropped.

These included a non-reimbursable special prescription charge and a reform of civil servants' pension system.

A new tax to finance the social security system's accumulated debt of 230 billion francs (\$46 billion) was believed to have been reduced in size and spread over a longer period.

Force Ouvriere called Monday for a 24-hour general strike on Nov. 28 to protest the reforms and was expected to be joined by the Communist-led CGT union and probably by the pro-Socialist CFDT.

All labour unions mounted a general strike last month by five million public sector workers in protest at a wage freeze.

Opening the parliamentary debate on the welfare reforms Monday, Mr. Juppe called for unity among the conservative coalition, but Mr. Balladur, who has regained significant political influence and recovered from his presidential defeat, warned Monday against imposing extra contributions to finance the reforms.

"We must proceed ... not by continually increasing taxes, but by bringing expenditure under control and refusing all new expenses which are not financed," he said in an opinion piece in the daily Le Monde.

Speaking in the debate late Monday, Mr. Balladur's former budget minister and campaign spokesman, Nicolas Sarkozy, warned of the "risk of halting growth" if a new tax was created.

Another Balladur support, neo-Gaullist Deputy Philippe Auberger, warned Tuesday against "costly new benefits," referring to a dependent persons' allowance that has been promised by Mr. Juppe.

The allowance, if it is voted by parliament, will be one of the few presidential campaign promises made by President Jacques Chirac to have been kept.

Reduction of public deficits has been set as a top priority by Mr. Chirac. Deficits must be reduced to three percent of GNP to qualify for the single European currency in 1999.

1st Beatles single for 25 years under guard

LONDON (R) — The Beatles' first single recording for 25 years is being kept under armed guard abroad until its worldwide release on Dec. 4, their record company said in London.

Beatlemania looks set for a revival now that the three surviving Beatles have come together to record Free As A Bird, a John Lennon song that Lennon put on tape three years before he was killed by a gunman outside his New York apartment in 1980.

Lennon's widow, Yoko Ono, gave a tape of the unfinished song to Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Ringo Starr, who returned to the recording studio for the first time in a quarter of a century to recreate the sound of the world's most famous group.

George Harrison and Ringo Starr, who returned to the recording studio for the first time in a quarter of a century to recreate the sound of the world's most famous group.

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Seed comes to life after 1,200-year wait

LOS ANGELES (R) — Scientists studying the origins of life have germinated the oldest known seed ever found, a 1,200-year-old lotus seed from China, they reported.

"A little seed that slept for more than 1,000 years sprouted in four days just like its modern sibling," said plant physiologist Jane Shen-Miller of the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA). In addition to the 1,200-year-old seed, three other ancient lotus seeds were germinated by the UCLA team and dated by radiocarbon techniques.

One was more than 600 years old and another more than 300 the age of the fourth was not known.

There's life beyond Cheers for Kirstie Alley

BEVERLY HILLS, California (R) — As far as Kirstie Alley is concerned, you can forget about any on-screen reunions of the classic television comedy Cheers. "God, I hope not, I hate reunions," exclaimed the actress who played the manager of America's favourite bar for six years.

Scolding a reporter for even suggesting such a thing, she said: "What are you reuniting? To me a reunion show of any kind is so everyone can go 'oh, look at him, he's bald,' and 'look at her,' it's a comparison of physical attributes." Art cannot be recreated, she says. "They (shows) stand on their own. It is what it was, like 'goodbye, let it go.'"

Four Weddings And A Funeral keeps F-word

LONDON (R) — An anti-porn campaigner has called for a ban on the first British television screening of the hit movie Four Weddings And A Funeral because Hugh Grant swears in it — but the channel has refused to back down and bleep him. "In the first three minutes there is nothing but a stream of F-words and that cannot be justified," media "clean-up" campaigner Mary White House said.

Mexican election campaign sours over chocolate

MORELIA, Mexico (R) — In a potential election scandal quickly dubbed "operation bonbon," Mexico's ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) was accused of handing out boxes of chocolates to woo voters.

Leftist leaders of the opposition Democratic Revolution Party (PRD) showed reporters packing cases full of chocolates, which they said they had seized from PRI officials caught red-handed in a poor suburb in southern Morelia. The candies had a greeting card attached from a PRI local congressional candidate.

quoted Kazakh saying the meeting with Mr. Nazarbayev was "personal nature but also cover Russian relations, economic and questions of the health of the presidential

Dulatz said Monday morning was mainly a

Russian shelling kills 2 in Chechnya

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russian forces killed two Chechen civilians and wounded three others during shelling of rebel-held areas of the breakaway republic, Interfax News Agency reported Tuesday, citing Chechen separatists.

Russian forces fired shells and rockets at the rebel-held villages of Achkhoy Martan, Orekhovo and Stary Achkhoy in western Chechnya, said officials loyal to Chechen independence leader Dzhokhar Dudayev.

They charged Russian forces had opened fire 49 times in the past 24 hours.

The villages of Dargo and Beni in the southeastern district of Vedeno also came under fire, the officials said, adding that Russian helicopter gunships carried out four attacks in the Achkhoy Martan and Shali areas.

There was no independent confirmation of the casualty figures.

Meanwhile a Russian soldier was killed in the Chechen capital Grozny overnight Monday during a

separatist attack on his military post, the federal command told Interfax.

Federal positions came under fire 26 times, 19 of them in Grozny, the command said.

Separately, in eastern Chechnya, near the border with Dagestan, nine freight wagons were derailed after a section of railway track was blown up between Nizhny Gerzil and Nuradilovo, Interfax said, adding that there were no casualties.

A demilitarisation accord signed on July 30 has been frequently violated by both sides.

In a separate development Tuesday, Movladi Udogov, information minister in the breakaway Chechen government, accused the Russians of refusing to provide a list of 145 Chechens due to be exchanged for 14 captive Russian soldiers, Interfax reported.

He said the separatists had also presented the Russians with a list of 1,438 other Chechen detainees but the

Russians had failed to confirm that they were holding any of them.

Meanwhile, Chechen military Commander Aslan Maskhadov dismissed a report that Doku Zavgayev, the new pro-Moscow Chechen leader in Grozny, had met separatist field commanders. The report originated from Mr. Zavgayev's office.

Commander Maskhadov said no such meeting could take place without his permission, Interfax reported.

Between 15,000 and 30,000 people, mostly civilians, have been killed since December last year when Russian troops launched an air and ground blitz against Chechen independence fighters.

The European Commission announced Tuesday that it had approved a winter aid programme for Chechnya worth six million ECUs (\$4.6 million) to cover urgent food, medical and shelter needs over the next six months.

Aristide, U.N. call for order as protests spread

PORT-AU-PRINCE (R) — President Jean-Bertrand Aristide called for order Monday as violence spread into Haiti's countryside, and the United Nations pledged help to curb a citizen's disarmament campaign that turned nasty.

"There is a possibility to get out of control. There is a possibility for provocation," said Mr. Aristide of the latest protests. "We will never accept one or the other."

U.N. special envoy Lakhdar Brahimi, calling weapons searches by civilians illegal, said the United Nations would not continue to look idly by. "We cannot help the population commit illegal acts," said Mr. Brahimi.

"Only the police can search vehicles, only the police can conduct searches... These roadblocks will be dismantled. Police and only police will do this job."

Mr. Brahimi said the United Nations would help Haitian police operate roadblocks and carry out search warrants once they took control of the situation.

Haiti erupted into spontaneous street protests Saturday after Mr. Aristide gave an angry speech at the funeral of his cousin, lawmaker Jean-Hubert Feuillie, who was assassinated last week.

Although violence diminished in the capital it spread into rural areas where many Aristide supporters are angry that he cannot run for re-election in the Dec. 17 poll.

Violence peaked in the town of Gonaives, located 177 kilometres north of the capital where at least four people were killed Monday by protesters and 15 homes burned down, U.N. officials said.

Barricades were set up at the entrance of Gonaives and residents were seen rounding up former army supporters and tying them up before handing them over to police.

They say Bonn simply wants to match the United States in its level of military cooperation with Beijing by exploring ways to work together on military medicine or training methods.

Mr. Kohl met Chinese leaders Monday, and presented Premier Li Peng with a plea from the German Catholic Church for better treatment of Catholics in atheist China and with a list of 15 imprisoned Chinese dissidents.

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Early official returns show Arzu leading Guatemala vote

GUATEMALA CITY (AP) — Conservative businessman Alvaro Arzu took a big lead in first official returns from Guatemala's presidential election, but it was unclear late Sunday whether he could claim victory without a runoff.

Early results indicated turnout may have been less than 30 per cent in Guatemala's third civilian presidential election in 10 years, despite a truce called

by rebels eager to work with a new government to end three decades of fighting.

Mr. Arzu, a popular former mayor of Guatemala City and former foreign minister, had been the clear front-runner in a field of 19 candidates.

Official returns from 174 of the country's 6,348 precincts showed Mr. Arzu with 25,096 votes or 61.05 per cent against 7,104 votes

or 17.4 per cent for his nearest challenger, Alfonso Portillo, election authorities reported.

The only leftist party taking part, the new Guatemala Democratic Front led by candidate Jorge Gonzalez Del Valle, had 2,740 votes or 6.07 per cent for a surprisingly strong third in the preliminary results.

The returns were all from the capital, Mr. Arzu's power base.

Mr. Arzu, of the National Advanced Party, must receive more than half the votes to win outright, or he faces a runoff with his nearest rival on Jan. 7. The winner will be sworn in on Jan. 14, Mr. Arzu's 50th birthday, for a four-year term.

Guatemalans also were electing a vice president. 80 members of the National Legislature, 300 mayors and 20 members of the Central

American Parliament. Pre-election polls had shown Mr. Arzu with about double the support of Mr. Portillo, a former congressman of the Guatemalan Republican Front.

Only an hour after the polls closed, telephone operators at Mr. Arzu's National Advanced Party were answering the phones with a cheerful "winning party, how can I help you?"

Voting passed with no incidents reported. Final official results weren't expected until midweek.

In addition to making peace with the rebels, the next president will be expected to reduce the political power of Guatemala's military, revive a sluggish economy and combat rampant corruption and high crime.

As a goodwill gesture, leftist National Revolutionary

Unity rebels not only called a 12-day ceasefire to end at midnight Monday, but left their mountain hideouts to urge people in towns and villages to vote.

The rebels spurred elections until this year. They hope the next president will make more progress in U.N.-mediated talks to end a 34-year-old insurrection that has claimed 140,000 lives.

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Some crew members of the space shuttle Atlantis — pilot Jim Halsall (left), Canadian Chris Hadfield (centre) and Commander Ken Cameron — answer questions for the Canadian press during a video link from the aft flight deck (AFP photo)

Shuttle installs docking tunnel for Mir rendezvous

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The five astronauts aboard the U.S. space shuttle Atlantis installed a five-metre (15-foot) docking tunnel to the spacecraft early Friday that will be used in its linkup with the Russian Mir space station Wednesday.

The shuttle, carrying four U.S. astronauts and a Canadian, blasted off Sunday on an eight-day mission in the next big step toward building an international outpost in space.

The first joining of a U.S. space shuttle with Mir came last July. Atlantis is scheduled to detach from Mir Saturday.

The Atlantis-Mir mission is also an unprecedented gathering in space of astronauts of four different nationalities — US, Canadian, Russian, and German. In addition to the docking tunnel, Atlantis will also deliver to Mir water and other materials, including two new solar panels. One is Russian-made and the other a joint effort by Russians and Americans.

U.N.: Tens of thousands of species doomed to vanish

WASHINGTON (R) — Human behaviour is condemning tens of thousands of plants and animals to extinction, scientists from 50 countries said Tuesday in a report meant to spur nations into protecting biodiversity.

Rescuers seek hundreds caught in Nepal snow

KATHMANDU (R) — Rescuers in helicopters searched Tuesday for hundreds of foreign trekkers trapped in the Himalayan mountains by heavy snowfall after at least 42 people died in one of Nepal's worst avalanche disasters.

Government officials said hundreds, perhaps thousands, of foreign trekkers had set out on hiking expeditions across the Himalayan kingdom before the freak snow storm, churned up by a cyclone in the Bay of Bengal, hit the region.

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) said in its global diversity assessment, prepared for an international biodiversity conference in Indonesia, that the world had 13 million to 14 million species. This was the most accurate estimate to date, it said.

Seventeen foreigners were among the 42 who died over the weekend. A huge avalanche buried 26 people including 13 Japanese near Mount Everest. Seventeen others including an Irish woman, two Canadians and a German died as houses collapsed and were buried under two metres of snow elsewhere in Nepal.

Of that total, just 13 per cent or about 1.75 million species have been scientifically described. Potential uses of species for food, medicine and to sustain ecosystems are largely unknown, the assessment said.

November is the peak season for trekkers. Some 9,000 foreigners registered in the three weeks to Nov. 8 for trekking expeditions. About 2,700 said they planned to go to the Everest region, while 3,200 were headed to Annapurna area and another 300 to the Kanchenjunga region.

Because of loss or conversion of wildlife habitat worldwide, it said, tens of thousands of species were sure to vanish with no possible action to prevent it.

Officials said they did not know exactly how many trekkers, guides and porters had been trapped in the mountains by freezing cold weather, deep snow and avalanches.

"The reason for doing the report was for the first time ever to get more than a thousand of the world's best known scientists to speak with one voice to influence policymakers in Jakarta to take effective action," said R.T. Watson, project chairman and an associate director at the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy.

On Monday eight helicopters plucked 237 people, including 111 foreigners, to safety after bad weather and poor visibility delayed rescue operations.

"The goal ... was to assess the importance of biodiversity to humankind and point out how we are losing biodiversity at a truly alarming rate," Mr. Watson told Reuters.

On Monday helicopters ferried survivors from the Gokyo Valley in the Everest region, Manang in mid-west Nepal and Langtang in central Nepal, Mr. Shrestha said.

Flowering plants and vertebrate animals are disappearing at 50 to 100 times the average expected natural rate, the report said. At least 5,400 animals and 4,000 plants of the catalogued species faced extinction, it added.

Over the next 25 years, tropical forests could lose species at 1,000 to 10,000 times the natural rate. Even if some threatened species survive, the report said, many would lose distinct populations or genetic differences.

Yeltsin holds talks in hospital with Kazakh leader

MOSCOW (R) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin, recovering in hospital from a mild heart attack, met Kazakh leader Nursultan Nazarbayev Tuesday — his first talks with a foreign leader — since falling ill almost three weeks ago.

Interfax News Agency said the meeting at Moscow's Central Clinical Hospital was likely to be more than just a courtesy call by Mr. Nazarbayev.

when to hold their plenary meeting, Interfax said.

Mr. Yeltsin also believed the Federation Council upper chamber should set a date for a presidential election, due to take place next June. Mr. Satarov said this would ease speculation that Mr. Yeltsin planned to postpone or cancel the vote.

Interfax said the meeting was the first since Yeltsin's second mild heart attack in less than four months.

TASS said the Federation Council had voted to debate the issue Tuesday, but it might not get around to it as it was Number 28 on the agenda.

Mr. Yeltsin has not yet announced whether or not he plans to seek a second term, saying he will decide after the election to the Duma.

Mr. Yeltsin, who has been holding daily meetings with ministers and advisers, discussed parliamentary and presidential elections Monday with top political aide Georgy Satarov.

Mr. Chernomyrdin, visiting Tula south of Moscow, said the Duma election should go ahead. "The president has said it very clearly, the election cannot be postponed. You can't change the rules during the game," he told reporters.

The vote, in which Communists and nationalists are expected to do well, is seen as a test for presidential elections.

The Constitutional Court still has to rule on complaints over a rule demanding parties win more than five per cent of the vote before they can win seats by proportional representation.

Earlier Tuesday President Yeltsin, looking well in his second public appearance since suffering the mild heart attack, said he was in complete control of Russia and promised a full recovery.

Foreign medical assistance was not necessary, he said, adding that Russian doctors and medicine could cope. "The recovery will be complete," he added.

The 64-year-old leader was also due to resume regular weekly meetings with Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin Tuesday.

Mr. Yeltsin dismissed as "idle talk" media reports that he required an operation for his ischemic heart condition — a blood supply problem that sidelined him for a month this summer.

He said he was already getting back to a normal work schedule, rising at 6 a.m., studying documents, taking phone calls and holding two or three meetings a day.

The two were likely to discuss the uncertainty surrounding a Dec. 17 parliamentary election, thrown into doubt by a constitutional challenge to the electoral law.

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Interfax quoted Kazakh officials as saying the meeting with Mr. Nazarbayev was of a personal nature but could also cover Russian-Kazakh relations, economic cooperation, and questions of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

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Sri Lanka troops capture key Tiger base in Jaffna

VAVUNIYA, Sri Lanka (R) — Sri Lankan forces have captured the main political headquarters of the Tamil Tigers on the outskirts of the guerrilla stronghold of Jaffna, civilians arriving in the northern town of Vavuniya said Tuesday.

Tamil residents from Jaffna told Reuters in the government-held frontline town of Vavuniya that the army has captured the Kondavil-based headquarters of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), five kilometres north of Jaffna town.

Travellers from Jaffna said the fall of Kondavil was likely to be a major setback for the Tigers, who also lost a large training camp to advancing troops Monday in the suburb of Urumpirai, about five kilometres northeast of Jaffna City.

It was not clear when the Kondavil headquarters fell to the army, but a military statement Tuesday said the LTTE's Urumpirai training camp was taken Monday.

The training camp comprises an elaborate network of roads and a well laid out building complex, lecture hall with underground bunkers and well-prepared training areas, the army statement said.

Recent army pictures released to the media show

Jaffna residents said that important LTTE leaders had fled the northern peninsula and moved to the jungles of Kilinochchi on the mainland to evade an army dragnet.

Tiger rebels Tuesday accused the military, which now controls the northern suburbs of Jaffna City, of destroying property belonging to Tamils who have fled the area.

"Bulldozing of houses in areas under their control is rampant. Heavy shelling of residential areas has resulted in widespread destruction of properties," a statement from LTTE said.

"As most civilians had already fled the area, casualty levels during this widespread shelling have been low."

The claim prompted a swift denial from the army. A military spokesman said troops, beating back the Tigers from the Valikamam east, Urumpirai and Kopai north areas — between two and five kilometres north and northwest of Jaffna City — have left civilian property intact.

"It is totally false. We have not destroyed civilian property," the spokesman told Reuters Tuesday.

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Gramm, Dole throw mud in presidential race

WASHINGTON (R) — The Republican presidential race has suddenly turned nasty, with Senate majority leader Bob Dole saying Texas Senator Phil Gramm was like "a bug that keeps crawling around" even after being squished.

In an interview with Time magazine published Monday, Sen. Dole said of Sen. Gramm: "I've told Phil that we've got a lot to do around here (in the Senate) and that we ought to cool down. I'm all for burying the hatchet. In him."

Sen. Dole, who leads the Republican presidential field in most polls by 20 percentage points or more, quickly added he was "just joking" but went on to accuse Sen. Gramm of constantly trying to get the better of him in the Senate.

He won't stop. He's relentless. He doesn't value being responsible. He's like

a bug you step on that keeps crawling around no matter how hard you squish him," said Sen. Dole.

The Gramm campaign immediately faxed the quotes around the country to reporters and political activists. Sen. Dole campaign spokesman Nelson Warfield said of the Time interview: "We're not going to dispute the authenticity of the quotes."

Sen. Dole has a reputation for having a short fuse and an acerbic sense of humour. His displays of temper landed him in trouble in his previous presidential bids in 1980 and 1988.

The rhetoric flared in advance of an important straw poll this weekend in Orlando, Florida.

The non-binding poll of 3,300 Republican activists is the last major test of strength before Republicans begin choosing their presi-

dential nominee to face President Bill Clinton in a series of state primary elections early next year.

It has suddenly emerged as the most important test of organisation and support of the 1995 political year. And the Dole and Gramm campaigns have been going all-out for votes. Recently, they also started taking the negative road.

The Dole campaign has been calling delegates telling them Sen. Gramm had the second worst attendance record in the Senate and had missed 22 votes on important Republican items.

The Gramm campaign took out advertisements mocking Sen. Dole for handing out gourmet chocolates and bath oils to delegates to buy their votes. The Dole campaign did indeed give delegates to a recent Republican women's con-

ference in Florida a tote bag containing Godiva chocolates and gift toiletries.

"You've got a front-runner in Dole that doesn't have a message and is full of chocolate so he's launching negative attacks. Senator Gramm is very disappointed that Dole should have started down the negative path so early," said Sen. Gramm campaign spokesman Gary Koops.

But Dole spokesman Warfield said Sen. Gramm started the negative campaigning months ago, impugnig Sen. Dole's conservative credentials and accusing him of being a "proud moderate" — a deadly insult in Republican terms.

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Karachi strike losses put at \$38 million a day

KARACHI, Pakistan (R) — Strikes in the volatile city of Karachi, Pakistan's economic hub, cause losses of nearly \$38 million a day, a business group study has calculated.

The southern port city, with an estimated 12 million people, has ground to a halt on 28 strike days so far this year, mostly at the behest of the ethnic Mohajir National Movement (MQM).

"A working day lost by one strike in Karachi costs the economy a minimum loss of 1.3 billion rupees (\$38 million)," said a research paper commissioned by the Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) and not yet published.

Karachi, Pakistan's only port, is also its financial capital, main trading entrepot and industrial powerhouse.

Ethnic, sectarian and political violence, much of

it pitting MQM militants against security forces, has killed more than 1,680 people this year and shattered business confidence.

The KCCI study said its strike cost estimate included losses to the manufacturing, construction, banking and insurance, transport and storage, foreign trade and perishable food sectors, as well as government revenue in the form of indirect taxation.

groups in their areas," Mr. Rehman said, referring to protection money.

He said the study might have overstated direct losses, but did not take into account the indirect impact of unrest.

"No one can account for potential investment opportunities lost, potential sales lost... Or losses of small-scale entrepreneurs because of a strike or daily violence," he said.

Mr. Rehman said many wholesale dealers, shopkeepers and small industrial units in troubled areas were close to bankruptcy.

The study put total strike losses at 29 billion rupees (\$845 million) in the first nine months of 1995, not including losses from partial strikes or stoppages that occurred on 20 days.

In a separate development, Pakistan's Defence Minister Aftab Shaaban Meerani said Tuesday that a group of detained Islamist

army officers had plotted a coup in September.

The group planned to eliminate Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, President Farooq Leghari, as well as the entire military leadership, he told the Senate (upper house).

First news of the alleged plot had surfaced in mid-October when Ms. Bhutto, who has vowed to fight religious extremism in Pakistan but relies on the support of some religious parties, said some officers had been detained for questioning.

In the first official account of the affair, Mr. Meerani said the conspirators included a major-general, a brigadier, three colonels, half a dozen other officers and a few civilians.

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Jordan Times

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 مؤسسة الصحافة الأردنية
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Back to basics

JORDAN AND BAHRAIN, the small but vibrant Emirate on the Arabian Gulf, are on the threshold of entering a new era in their bilateral relations following the successful visit of Crown Prince Hassan a couple of days ago. The historically strong ties that existed between the two countries before 1990 inevitably suffered some strains during the Gulf crisis and war. Now, however, the door is open not only to reestablish those old ties but also to forge new links on grounds that can withstand the test of time.

The Crown Prince spent the best part of his visit, short as it was, discussing with Bahraini leaders just what these grounds might be, in the overall context of regional politics and the Arab World in particular. The picture that emerged was clear: The Arabs cannot afford to repeat mistakes of the past; divisions within the Arab camp have led to its weakness and vulnerability and as such they have to be rectified through joint efforts; smaller countries like Jordan and Bahrain had to bear the major brunt of conflicts that were fomented elsewhere; the security of the region cannot be served by exhausting resources on arms building without paying due attention to infrastructural needs, which cost infinitely less funds to satisfy; terrorism and interference in the internal affairs of other countries have to be fought by solid and coordinated action by all states of the region, just as much as stability can be enhanced by respect for democratic and human rights throughout the area.

The Jordanian-Bahraini talks seem to have succeeded not only because the two sides reached a shared analysis of what went wrong, without going into unnecessary details, but also because Jordan and Bahrain emerged with a common vision on what needed to be done and pledged to work together in drawing a framework for materialising this vision. Bahrain would work in its own sphere to speed up the process of Arab reconciliation, while Jordan do what it could in contributing to regional peace and prosperity. Through setting up joint bodies and institutionalising joint work, the two countries could serve as a bridge towards ensuring mutual interests, reaching common goals and strengthening humanitarian causes.

It is heartening to note that the Jordanian and Bahraini leaders did not overlook the need to go beyond regional politics and strive together towards serving world peace, security and globalism. The Arabs have a role to play in opening up to the rest of the world and in consolidating international understanding, beginning where all efforts should start, at home and within the region.

Jordan, and Bahrain, following the Crown Prince's visit to Manama, can draw comfort from the fact that they have not waited in vain for the moment when the Arab World could start closing ranks again, this time hopefully on more solid and enduring basis.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

MAHMOUD RIMAWI, addressed the 60th birthday of His Majesty King Hussein, saying that Jordanians today recall the struggle of the Kingdom under King Hussein and the numerous achievements realised under his reign. From a small country with meagre resources, Jordan has been transformed over the past few decades into modern state; and with little means available to the Jordanian people Jordan has been able to accomplish a great deal in social, economic and political domains thanks to the King's wise leadership, said the writer. Jordanians have reason to be proud of their Kingdom and their leader; and the King's 60th birthday is truly a national occasion for all citizens on his day, said the writer. Thankful as they are to the King's endeavours, he added, the Jordanian people look forward to further strides in development and progress in a country blessed with democracy, and also look forward to the day when a comprehensive peace is established in the Middle East with all the occupied territories including Arab Jerusalem returned to their lawful owners.

RECENT decision by the Social Security Corporation to increase by 10 per cent the amount of pension for retired Jordanians covered by the corporation's scheme was criticised by Samih Maayta, a writer in Al Dustour. He said that the increase fell far below the minimum level required by a pensioner to have a decent life and failed to help pensioners rise above the poverty line. It had been hoped that the SSC will introduce a drastic change to provide pensioners who are elderly people at least with the bare minimum to keep them above the poverty line, said the writer. It has been established that with total income reaching JD 100 a month are considered as living around the poverty line but many of the SSC pensioners receive JD 75 even with the latest increase in their pension, continued the writer.

Washington Watch

Rabin's assassination and the prospects for peace

By Dr. James Zogby

THE ASSASSINATION of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin casts a pall over the Middle East peace process. It is a tragic reminder of the role that religiously-based fanaticism has played in shaping Israeli policy towards the peace process.

For two years now, Israel's fundamentalists and their threats of violence have seriously constrained the ability of the Israeli government to meet several Palestinian concerns in the process. Continued settlement building, maintaining provocative settler communities in Gaza and Hebron, and regular episodes of settler violence against Palestinians in the West Bank have all combined to distort the process and delay implementation of the Declaration of Principles.

Now Mr. Rabin, who was so often frustrated by those groups, and who frequently denounced them, has lost his life to tone of their disciples.

While many question whether or not the process will survive the passing of Mr. Rabin, in a recent meeting with Arab-American leaders President Bill Clinton provided a U.S. commitment that the timetable agreed upon by the Israelis and Palestinians would be adhered to.

Those of us who met with the president pressed him

on this point and indicated our deep concern for the continuity of the peace process. We also articulated our frustration with the status quo before the Mr. Rabin assassination: the slow pace of implementation, the conditions facing Palestinians in Hebron and Jerusalem, and the difficulties faced by Palestinians resulting from continuing closure of the West Bank and Gaza as well as other non-security impediments to Palestinians economic growth.

The president was quite clear in asserting the importance of "bringing the fruits of peace" to the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, and his understanding of the difficulties created by the closures and other impediments.

Other administration officials with whom Arab-Americans recently met were equally clear on these points. U.S. Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown repeated a call he made last January when he travelled to Gaza and met with PNA President Yasser Arafat and the Palestinian business community. The closure of the territories is an impediment to business and growth. Another way must be found to balance Israeli security concerns with Palestinian economic

needs. Another U.S. administration official who spoke to Arab-Americans this weekend presented an optimistic assessment of the peace process in the wake of the assassination of Prime Minister Rabin. The loss of Mr. Rabin, he stated, was a tragic one for peace. He asserted that the prime minister had both the vision and the strength to mobilise Israeli support to sustain the drive towards peace. But, the administration official noted, the murder of the prime minister "cannot and will not stop the process" because there are forces driving the process forward on both sides. The peace process, in his view, has become both institutionalised and irreversible.

One thing is certain. Israeli society and the American Jewish community have been traumatised by the assassination. U.S. officials have been shocked, as well, by their recognition of the real threat posed by Jewish fundamentalism and violence.

Recent polls show that Israelis have responded to the murder of Mr. Rabin by becoming even more strongly committed to carrying out Israel's withdrawal from the territories, cracking down on violent right-wing factions and

even supporting acting Prime Minister Shimon Peres in election polls over Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu.

Whether or not these attitudes will be sustained, and whether or not the terms of Israeli-Palestinian agreements and timetables will be adhered to remains to be seen. But what is clear is that the ugly murder of Mr. Rabin has shaken up attitudes in Israel and forced the issue of peace to be more directly debated and addressed than ever before.

That the assassination occurred within the week after the Amman Middle East and North Africa (MENA) summit is ironic. The summit was an impressive affair, and an overall success for its Jordanian hosts. Amman was freshly painted, secure and hospitable decked out in with banners celebrating the presence of its international visitors.

The theme of the conference was brilliantly described by U.S. Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown, who noted the promise that MENA represents. He constructed a vision for those attending the conference of the future and its possibilities for prosperity and growth. It was a compelling vision — but one that requires the achievement of a just and comprehensive

peace before it becomes a lasting reality.

But in travelling the next day to Jerusalem and Hebron, I was taken from the vision of MENA to the reality of the West Bank. Instead of "Peace Today, Profit Tomorrow" or "MENA Today, the World Tomorrow" (as two of Amman's banners read), I remarked that my visit felt more like "MENA Yesterday, Reality Today."

Palestinians still cannot do business. Some Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza were even denied permits to cross over the border to attend the MENA conference. And with provocative settlers and impediments to economic development everywhere, it is clear that if the process does not move forward with all deliberate haste and with greater justice and respect for Palestinians and their rights, the vision of regional peace could well collapse because its foundation — the Israeli-Palestinian track — is not yet firmly established.

This is the issue that Israelis will now have to confront directly. For the promise of peace and regional economic cooperation to become a reality, Israel must counter the threat posed by right-wing fanaticism and move forward in acting concretely to recognise Palestinian rights.

LETTERS

'Little surprises'

IF YOU, as an expert or as an observer of the Middle East scene, thought that you knew what is going on in this region, and if you were one of those who were surprised by the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, a piece of advice is in order here: Rewrite your notes more diligently.

But little surprises cannot be excluded either, such as the decision of Ret. General Colin Powell not to run for the presidency in the U.S. next year. Does his skin colour have something to do with it? In other words, was his "race", which is black, a main reason for abandoning the race? How can Mr. Powell's decision be related to the assassination of a high ranking Israeli official, tens of thousands of miles away from Uncle Sam's front and back yard? Observers of the Middle East political scene, know that no one in this region is immune against the touch of a violent arm, without any prior notice, and in the most unrelated moment and place.

It is a phenomenon that not so many people are proud of. But it is fact of life that, was created and consolidated by many parties in and outside the Middle East.

Could this be the real reason for Colin Powell's wife insistence that her husband should not run for the presidency in the U.S.? In her mind, the American politics is heavily involved, if not intertwined, with the Middle East politics. Experience has taught us that the latter is contagious and knows no boundaries.

Her, too, you ran into one or two interesting, if not surprising, developments since the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin.

A reasonable amount of Arab press coverage and analysis, by commentators who usually reflect the sentiments of the average man in the street, as the term has it, has shown a notable soft and reconciliatory tone vis-a-vis the assassination event. There you can see a clear cut sense of worry regarding the nascent peace between Israel and its Arab neighbours.

The alternative to Mr. Rabin and his colleagues is a guaranteed nightmare. If the flag changed hands to people who applauded and condoned what Yigal Amir did. The three shots that ended the life of the ex-Israeli professional soldier, have sent successive shock waves in the minds and hearts of the majority of people in the region. Among those are the commentators and addict observers of the political scene, some of whom had cherished a high degree of reservation and scepticism about the whole issue of the peace approach with Israel.

Therefore, you could sense a sudden and subtle change of heart in important media circles. And unconscious but genuine sense of worry about the future of Israel's stability as a democratic state. All kinds of advice and counsel are being poured out on how to preserve the status quo that prevailed in Israel until the fatal night of Saturday Nov. 5.

As if the killing of the ex-Israeli prime minister has unveiled the other face of Israel, and as if that murder has pushed Israel into a new unpredictable and scary phase. A phase and face that not only consider the Palestinians as intruders in the promised land of greater Israel, but also that brand people like Rabin and Peres as traitors to the real Jewish agenda. The task of such people is simple: Get rid of Rabin and his gang, politically and if necessary, physically.

What more can you think of as a source of chilling fear and cause for urgency?

The books on the Middle East peace making will not subside. The names of those who made it real will be written in glory, whether potential candidates for American presidency stayed the course or not, whether people like Yigal Amir were few or not, and whether we understood the Middle East or not.

Salim Ayoob,
 Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

Car scars

A newcomer to Jordan will be informed by all tourist literature that the most remarkable feature of this country is its wonderful people. The diverse books and pamphlets was eloquent about the freedom-loving bedouins, the generous peasants and the dynamic modern urban executives. Unfortunately, all these publications fail to bring to the attention of the visitor one of the most remarkable groups of this happy breed: The Jordanian car mechanic.

The principal attribute of Jordanian car mechanics is their sense of egalitarianism. Your car may be old, and it may be new. It may be equipped with a simple internal combustion engine of the most primordial design, or with a sophisticated, finely tuned, and computer-operated piece of space-age machinery. No matter what, you can rest assured that the Jordanian mechanic will treat all cars in the same way. He will discard the manual which you proffer and dive into the motor with spanners flailing.

Another trait of the Jordanian mechanic is his direct and frugal nature which shuns the superfluous. Every time I have a maintenance job done on my car, the mechanic emerges from its innards to hand me four or five nuts and screws which, he assures me, were unnecessary. Since my mechanical prowess is limited to the knowledge that the engine block resides under the bonnet, but not always, I have to take his word for it. But I shudder at the thought that, one fine day, as I drive on the desert highway, my car will simply fall apart, leaving me sitting in the middle of the tarmac holding on to the remains of a steering wheel.

In all likelihood, the trucks will not have time to run me over. Long before they have done so, I shall have choked to death on the billowing clouds of smoke gushing forth from their exhaust pipes. Nor does one need to go to the highway to get a lungful. Look at cars negotiating one of Amman's seven glorious Jabals... That is to say, try to look at the cars, because all you are likely to see is moving black clouds of exhaust emissions which will blind you and keep you coughing and sputtering for days on end. So, why do Jordanians rely on unqualified mechanics and decrepit spare parts? The answer is economics.

In the good old days, when customs duties on cars and spare parts stood at 100 per cent, people already groaned under the financial strain of keeping their cars road-worthy. To remedy the situation, in 1988, duties on cars and spare parts doubled with one fell swoop, while salaries remained unchanged. The result is that most motor vehicles on Jordanian roads are a menace to public safety and to the environment because people cannot afford to maintain them.

At a time when scarcely an official statement or declaration fails to stress the urgent need to conserve the environment, maybe we should try to limit environmental degradation by introducing environmentally friendly customs laws.

M. KAHIL



Saudi blast highlights Gulf military build-up

By Charles Aldinger
 Reuter

WASHINGTON — Monday's suspected car bomb blast that killed five Americans in Saudi Arabia threw a spotlight on the major military build-up by Washington and moderate Arab states in the region since the 1991 Gulf war.

It also highlighted internal and external threats facing the publicity shy ruling Saudi royal family over its growing ties with the West and quiet support of Middle East peace.

There are some 140 U.S. warplanes, 15 warships and 12,000 U.S. military personnel afloat and ashore in the area to help the Saudis and other states in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) face what are seen as threats from Iraq and Iran.

But analysts in Washington say the higher profile of non-Muslim military personnel has brought problems as well as solutions to the GCC, which also includes Kuwait, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Oman and Qatar.

"The build-up by the United States and its supply of arms to the Saudis and others since the Gulf war has been brilliantly successful in containing the threat from Iraq and Iran," said Shibley Telhami of the Brookings Institution.

"But the whole thing, including the establishment this year of a U.S. navy fleet based in Bahrain, has increased internal political unrest in the Gulf states,"

added Dr. Telhami, a Middle East expert at the private Washington think tank.

A previously unknown organisation calling itself Tigers of the Gulf claimed responsibility for Monday's attack in a telephone call to an international news agency in the Gulf.

"If the Americans don't leave the kingdom as soon as possible we will continue our actions," the caller said, speaking from Saudi Arabia. It was not possible to verify the claim.

Former assistant defence secretary Lawrence Korb, also an analyst at Brookings, said the incident — no matter who was to blame — was an indication of complicated political dynamics of the Gulf.

"You have to remember that Saudi Arabia and Kuwait are not democracies. There are deep internal tensions there and it is a very, very difficult balancing act for the United States in the region," Mr. Korb said.

"Remember what happened with the Shah (of Iran), who was not exactly a benevolent leader?" he asked.

The desert kingdom, launching pad for the U.S.-led multinational military force against Iraq in the 1991 Gulf war, is an absolute monarchy without a legislature or political parties. It has been ruled by King Fahd since 1982 and Islamic Sharia law prevails.

There are few U.S. army or marine corps personnel permanently stationed on the ground in Saudi Arabia

King reaffirms resolve

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...not the most expensive but is certainly the saddest. The prime minister indeed to give it to you personally but most regrettably I do so on his behalf. I do not ask Prime Minister Rabin's permission as one who was a close personal witness to the emotional relationship between the two of you I know that you would have shed your good health, long life, and success... I believe in the Rabin family and the state of Israel join me in the King, happy birthday as we say in Hebrew.

The King replied: "Thank you very much indeed for coming over with this very special gift. It is in this very house in this room that I met our dear friend so many times in our joint effort to achieve peace between two countries and nations within the context of a comprehensive peace. His loss is very personal one. He was a man of honour, courage and vision and he had the gift of seeing beyond today, and tomorrow and dedicating his life for everyone, for future generations and their interest."

"I always miss my brother and dear friend. But I believe in spirit will always be with him. And if there is anything that I can commit to as I have been so far for the rest of my life is to work for what he worked for, and what we worked together, and that is a better future for all our people and for this region. I hope that you will convey to the Rabin family our love, respects, and in the same way, our warmest wishes. After all to me they are our family. And the memories will always be there, they will be kept in a very special place in our hearts. Thank you so much for such a thoughtful gift and I know that your friend is with us in our hearts, in our minds and in time I hope our efforts to accomplish what we worked together to achieve and achieved and now that hopefully a better future. Thank you very much."

Ambassador Shamir said: "Your Majesty, I have the honour to deliver this message sent to Your Majesty by the Prime Minister. The King's efforts on the occasion of his 60th birthday. On this not always a occasion, I offer you the best wishes on behalf of the Israeli government and people, adding at the wishing you good health and one fine day all your people further progress on the desert and prosperity, progress year will bring peace under your rule, leaving courageous and wise leadership in the middle of the King replied: "Thank you. Could you please convey my thanks and appreciation to the acting prime minister. I am proud of our friendship which has lasted for a long period as long as I shall establish a just and honourable peace in this region between the two peoples and bring forth from the conditions that he is personally passing through as a result of losing a brother and get a long life, a comrade, and a brother for me too. I wish him every success and stress that we will support him with all our responsibilities in shouldering his responsibilities and wish him success on the way to serving our people and to achieve the warm peace, leading to full cooperation between our peoples and serving the coming generations."

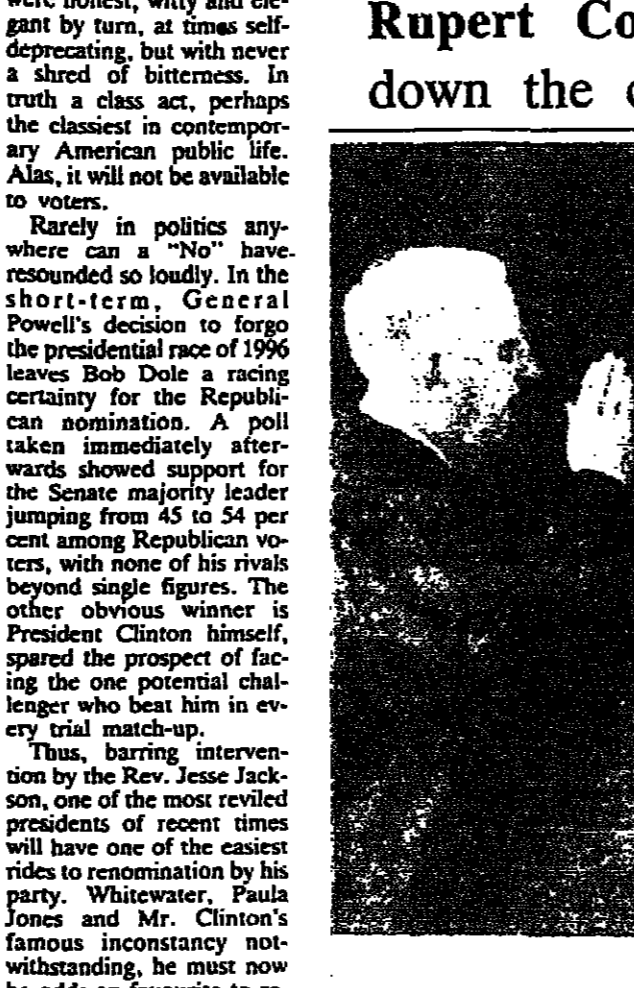
Replying to questions from Israeli journalists who accompanied Mr. Hager and Mr. Shamir, the King wished Mr. Peres "every success in carrying the banner and I assure him all our support and our help and we will not waver in the face of what happened."

"We must double our efforts to achieve the only worthy objective which is a comprehensive peace in this region and certainly as far as peace between Jordan and Israel is not only a reality, but a reality of which we are proud and it goes with the passage of every day. Yitzhak Rabin will always be remembered by all of us and will always be with us in his constructive courageous spirit and I wish his family all the wishes of our family here including myself."

Asked what message he had for the people of Israel, the King said: "I can tell them that my late friend left them a legacy of peace and I hope they will rise to the level of the challenge and will double their efforts for the sake of the coming generations to come in our region."

Who'd want to be president?

Rupert Cornwell on why General Powell turned down the chance to run for the White House



Yes please, said General Eisenhower (second from right); No thanks, said General Powell

WHEN HE started he seemed weary, half-dejected. But as the questions began, the Colin Powell of old emerged. His answers were honest, witty and elegant by turn, at times self-deprecating, but with never a shred of bitterness. In truth a class act, perhaps the classiest in contemporary American public life. Alas, it will not be available to voters.

Rarely in politics anywhere can a "No" have resounded so loudly. In the short-term, General Powell's decision to forgo the presidential race of 1996 leaves Bob Dole a racing certainty for the Republican nomination. A poll taken immediately afterwards showed support for the Senate majority leader jumping from 45 to 54 per cent among Republican voters, with none of his rivals beyond single figures. The other obvious winner is President Clinton himself, spared the prospect of facing the one potential challenger who beat him in every trial match-up.

Thus, barring intervention by the Rev. Jesse Jackson, one of the most reviled presidents of recent times will have one of the easiest rides to re-election by his party. Whitewater, Paula Jones and Mr. Clinton's famous inconstancy notwithstanding, he must now be odds-on favourite to retain the White House next year.

That very fact underscores the greater questions raised by the Gen. Powell withdrawal. Why do so many potentially excellent candidates refuse to run? And has the election system become so deformed that it now achieves the opposite of what it is supposed to do: pick the person best able to run the country?

The field of 1996 can be broken into not two, but three categories: the Democrats (consisting of Mr. Clinton and just possibly the Rev. Jackson), the 10 declared Republicans, and the no less long, but much weightier list of Republican notables who have opted out.

Of them, unarguably the third is on paper the most impressive. The former cabinet members Dick Cheney, Jack Kemp, Bill Bennett and James Baker; the former Vice-President Dan Quayle; Governors with the star quality of William Weld of Massachusetts; and now Gen. Powell — they have all been encouraged to run, pondered the matter and then issued a polite "No thanks."

The formal explanation is invariably "family reasons," and in Gen. Powell's case that was demonstrably true. Wednesday He may have looked tired, a touch dejected, as he began his announcement. Alma Powell, who had opposed a presidential run from the outset and who stood beside her husband on the podium, was positively beaming.

But disruption of family life is not the half of it. In 1979, George Washington, the first American soldier-turned-President, won office by acclamation. The last of them, Dwight Eisenhower, could spend what passed for the primary season of 1952 outside the country and confine his campaigning to a statement from the NATO command in Europe that he would take the Republican nomination if offered. No such luxury awaited the possible Eisenhower of 1996.

If Gen. Powell had decided to seek the U.S. presidency, he would have been subjected to an electoral ordeal unparalleled in the democracies on this planet for duration, cost, expenditure of energy, and sheer nastiness. Even in the abnormally brief 1992 cycle, curtailed by the apparent invincibility of George Bush, the campaign lasted 18 months.

This time, a really zealous contender like Senator Phil Gramm of Texas has been running almost from the moment of Mr. Clinton's inauguration on January 20, 1993. The travelling is murderous, the speech-making inane and the lack of privacy an endless humiliation. The quest for the presidency requires not a decent plan to balance the budget, but, in Gen. Powell's words, a "passion and commitment" that he could not feel. In Bill Clinton's case, passion and commitment meant a skin thick enough to undergo a

primetime national television appearance in January 1992, immediately after the football Superbowl, hand-in-hand with his wife, to explain away alleged marital infidelities.

Even before he had entered the race, warning shots were crossing the general's bows. Stories were afoot about his wife's mild depressive condition. Equally absurd, and certainly more wounding, were the attacks of conservative Republican activists, one of whom last week dismissed Gen. Powell's 35 years in the military, his two tours in Vietnam, his role in the Gulf war, as something out of Gilbert and Sullivan, the work of a man who had "become ruler of the Queen's navy by polishing the handles on the big brass front door." And all that before he was a candidate.

And yet every turn there is fundraising. The cost of a decent primary campaign runs at \$20 million — and most, if not all, of that must be raised before-hand.

With his exceptionally high name-recognition, Gen. Powell might have got away with less, but for lesser mortals the task is daunting. As Dan Quayle noted when he took himself out of consideration last February (mainly because of an unexpected inability to raise money), between then and the New Hampshire primary a year later he would have had to beg, borrow or otherwise wheedle \$50,000 a day. "Do you have to be out of your mind to seek the presidency?" Gen. Powell was asked last week. No, was the answer, out of obligatory deference to those subjecting themselves to the ordeal. But it helps.

The system, of course, has its defenders. The presidency, it may reasonably be insisted, is not a straightforward entry-level job. The brutality of a campaign is political Darwinism, ensuring the survival of the fittest, discarding the weak, the half-hearted and the inept. But surely, counter others, the methods of

No cabinet reshuffle before Parliament session

(Continued from page 1)

the changes that will be introduced in cooperation with Parliament.

"We are going to take action. But certainly it is going to be within the law. We are not going to break the law or act as if martial law is still there," the prime minister said, adding that the legislative changes that will be made will be "absolutely" in line with the democratic process. "We have not worked on the details but nothing is going to be done without going through the constitutional process."

"We are going to do this. And if this is what it takes to stop this sort of nonsense, I do not mind criticism of being dictatorial or undemocratic," Sharif Zeid said.

"Some people are working on destroying the morale of the people and destroying the confidence of the people in their country and their government."

"This is something that will make any of us angry," he said, in response to a question about the anger that surfaced in the King's address last week. "It has become a

lot of benefits that the union members had, and the government would take no action that will deny those members such benefits.

"Most of the members are decent people, truly Jordanian. We are not going to inflict on them any financial damage or loss. We are going to find a way to maintain their benefits," he said.

The professional associations have repeatedly come under criticism from the King and the government for interfering in politics to the detriment of professional interests.

The associations have been vocal in expressing opposition to the peace treaty with Israel and have adopted decisions that will allow for the punishment of members who "normalise ties with Israel."

Membership in the associations is mandatory for most of professions. Professional like doctors, lawyers and engineers cannot practise unless they are members of the union.

The associations have threatened to withdraw the practice licences of members who deal with Israelis.

The King has said that this

was unacceptable and instructed the government to remedy the situation.

It is not clear yet what the measures the government will take to end the unions' interference in politics, but some observers say the government might amend the law to make membership in the unions voluntary.

"We have a parliament," said Sharif Zeid. "If anybody wants to become a politician they can leave the unions and run for elections. You cannot use these institutions to further your political aims and your party's aims."

Sharif Zeid would not identify the country whose government King Hussein accused of cowardice in his address to the military officers for attacking Jordan because it signed the peace treaty with Israel. But he reiterated Jordan's rejection of any interference in its domestic affairs and stressed that the Kingdom's policies are articulated to serve the interests of Jordan.

"We have nothing to be embarrassed about" regarding the peace with Israel, Sharif Zeid said. "We didn't go in the dark and talked to

Saudis probe Riyadh blast

(Continued from page 1)

Among those claiming responsibility for the attack were the previously unknown groups called the "Tigers of the Gulf," and the "Islamic Movement for Change," he said.

A man claiming to be from Tigers of the Gulf called AFP to say his group had carried out the bombing to force U.S. troops to leave Saudi Arabia.

The Pentagon official ruled out a pullout of forces from the country where the United States has had military presence for 50 years. "This has been a very stable environment for the U.S. presence," the official said.

The official Saudi Press Agency said Riyadh will not change its policy over this "odious crime" and carried an interview by the interior

Minister Saud Al Faisal after the attack to express the league's concern for the maintenance of "stability" in the kingdom, which was "linked to the stability of all Arab countries."

The bombing triggered a wave of condemnation throughout the Arab World, although Iraq said it had "shaken the Saudi throne and made Washington tremble."

"Will the explosion lead to dramatic events in Saudi Arabia?" asked the official Al Jumhuriyah newspaper, adding that he attack "confirms reports from diplomatic circles and intelligence services that Saudi opposition movement exists."

It also quoted a European diplomat as saying the bombing is "a very serious message to the Saudi and American people around the world, which expresses feelings that have been repressed for more than five years."

Assad. Musa

(Continued from page 12)

1942," he said.

He also said Iraqi opposition groups had recently been presented with a proposal to divide the country up into three entities, which Syria would strongly oppose.

"We are deeply concerned and have consulted Arab governments and Iraqi opposition groups to confront this dangerous proposal," he said.

Israel's acting Prime Minister Shimon Peres meanwhile pledged he would make every effort to bridge differences with Syria and Lebanon before Israeli elections in the coming year, and said extremists were "messengers of the devil."

He told CNN's Larry King that he did not intend to spend time "electioneering."

Baqoura

(Continued from page 1)

Israeli Arabs who brought in weapons from Jordan to Israel.

They said entry to the Nahariyah (Baqoura) area would be barred until the army reopened it.

"It has been closed from Saturday until today (Tuesday) inclusive and the army will have to say when it reopens," police spokesman Eric Bar-Chen told Reuters.

"A couple of weeks ago three Israeli Arabs... received weapons from Jordan at that point. Another investigation which caused it to be closed now is under a court and I cannot comment on it," Mr. Bar-Chen said.

The two main border crossings used by tourists to move between Jordan and Israel are not affected by the move.

WTO: Trade growing faster than production

GENEVA (AFP) — World trade in merchandise is growing markedly faster than production and is a sign of increasing economic globalisation, the World Trade Organisation (WTO) said in an annual report for 1995 released here Tuesday.

The study, entitled *International Trade — Trends and Statistics*, found that trade in goods this year will increase three times faster than output and twice as fast in 1996.

In volume, world trade will grow by eight per cent, considered a high rate even though slightly down on the record 9.5 per cent growth recorded in 1994.

For 1996 the WTO predicted a further modest slowing but added that "trade growth will remain above the average of the past decade."

The report said that from 1950 to 1994, the volume of world trade in goods increased an average of slightly more than six per cent a year, against an increase in production in the same period of around four per cent a year.

"Thus, during those 45 years world merchandise trade multiplied 14 times and output 5.5 times," according to the study, which found that the gap between the two

growth rates widened considerably starting in 1990.

"But it is not yet clear whether or not this represents a permanent shift to a faster rate of increase in the world's trade-to-output ratio," the study said.

The WTO attributed the surge in trade and "global integration" to governmental policies as well as technological innovations that cut communication and transport costs.

"Those developing and transition economies which have participated in globalisation by opening up their own markets have enjoyed faster economic growth," according to the report.

For developed nations, members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, "there is evidence that the deepening of trade linkages has helped moderate cyclical downturns."

The study noted that technological change and "evolving strategies of firms and individual investors" are likely to provide momentum to globalisation.

But it cautioned that government policies can "speed up, slow down or even reverse progress on global integration."

In 1994, the value of trade in merchandise increased 13 per cent, surpassing the amount of \$4,000 billion for the first time to reach \$4,090 billion.

The value of trade in services went up eight per cent to reach \$1,100 billion after having stagnated in 1993.

For the first six months of 1995, merchandise trade rose 23 per cent in value, which, allowing for the depreciation of the U.S. dollar, corresponds to an eight per cent increase in full-year growth in volume.

"Among the world's top 20 trading nations, the WTO found that trade measured in exports grew more than 20 per cent in the first half of 1995 in China, Malaysia, South Korea and Mexico. Exchanges measured in imports increased 20 per cent in South Korea, Malaysia, Thailand and Brazil."

In the last decade trade in products from extractive industries fell from 14 per cent of the total of 11 per cent while the percentage of business machines and telecommunications equipment rose from nine to 11 per cent.

The percentage of other products in the overall picture held more or less constant.

Official study: Japan's prosperity only skin-deep

TOKYO (AFP) — Despite wealth that is the envy of the rest of the world, the Japanese people feel their quality of life lags behind other industrialised nations, according to an official study released Tuesday.

Small homes at astronomical prices, expensive consumer products, intense work pressure with few holidays, and a restricted social life are a few of many complaints made by the Japanese.

"Many Japanese still seem not to feel either affluence or a sense of satisfaction corresponding with the nation's economic growth," the report from the Economic Planning Agency (EPA) said.

The report entitled *Japan's 50 Post-war Years: In Search of a Diversified Richer Lifestyle* was carried out using official statistics and surveys among the population.

Japan's extraordinary post-war boom is illustrated by comparing its gross domestic product (GDP) figures with those of other countries, the report says.

In 1960 Japan represented 4.1 per cent of the sum of all countries' GDPs, but reached 18.3 per cent in 1993. GDP per inhabitant has surpassed that of the United States every year since 1987.

But the EPA says this apparent prosperity is only skin-deep.

Average living space is the smallest per inhabitant among the industrialised countries, while Tokyo and Osaka have the world's highest land prices — 10 times the average for the world's big cities.

Meanwhile, the difference between household income and house prices continues to grow.

The length of time spent working per year is higher than Germany, France or

Britain.

And although slightly shorter than in the United States, these figures do not include "voluntary" unpaid overtime, which remains high in Japan, although it is decreasing.

In 1993 Japanese employees worked 1,966 hours, against 1,976 hours in the United States, 1,902 hours in Britain, 1,678 hours in France and 1,529 hours in Germany, according to Japanese labour ministry statistics.

Paid holidays are also much shorter than in these four countries, the EPA says.

Although employees are legally entitled to 20 days' holidays in the year, many only take a small proportion of that, feeling pressure to show loyalty to their firm.

The EPA also notes that with higher prices, the Japanese consume less than people in other industrialised

countries, even though they have higher average incomes than other countries.

As a result of all these problems, Japanese who complain that their living standards have decreased have outnumbered those who see improvements since 1974.

Young people in particular are less satisfied with their family or professional lives than their counterparts in other industrialised countries.

Arab Gulf states' oil capacity rises but actual output stable

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab Gulf states are pressing ahead with plans to boost their oil production capacity but actual output has remained unchanged due to steady increases from non-OPEC producers, experts said.

Saudi Arabia and the two other Gulf oil giants Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) had banked on a steady growth in world demand to raise production and minimise economic damage caused by low crude prices.

But they have been unable to boost actual output over the past three years although expansion projects have created large surplus in their capacities.

"Gulf states are disappointed as their earlier projections of higher production did not come true," a Gulf-based oil analyst said. "They have no choice but to stick to their production quotas in fear any excess output could put further pressure on prices. This could be disastrous for their economies as they are already suffering from low prices."

Saudi Arabia, the world's leading oil power, produces around eight million barrels per day (b/d) while output by Kuwait and the UAE has remained at two million and 2.16 million b/d under an

OPEC quota agreement.

The 12-nation Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) assigned the quotas in September 1993, when it fixed on output ceiling of 24.52 million b/d for its members. The ceiling has remained intact ever since.

OPEC oil ministers are due to meet in Vienna on Nov. 21 to decide whether to change the ceiling or roll it over. Experts said it was most likely the group would extend the ceiling as it had no other choices.

"OPEC has little room to manoeuvre as it already exceeds its ceiling by nearly one million b/d and producers outside it are hiking output. A rise in the ceiling could lead to a price collapse," one expert said.

OPEC's production ceiling has remained unchanged although world demand has grown by more than two million b/d over the past two years.

In 1994, demand grew by around one million b/d to 68.5 million b/d while it is forecast to rise by 1.1 million b/d in 1995 and 1.6 million b/d in 1996.

The bulk of the increase in the past two years was met on North Sea producers Britain and Norway, which will likely account for most of the growth in 1996, according to OPEC and independent estimates. Increases will also come from China, Mexico, Brazil, Ecuador, Argentina and Oman.

Venezuela and some other OPEC members have been blamed for most of the group's excess production of around one million b/d in September. But Gulf states have stressed they would respect their output quotas, fearing any violations could spur another production war and hit prices.

According to the Kuwait-based Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC), production by its 10 members grew by only 200,000 b/d in 1994 and there would be a similar rise

in 1995 and 1996.

It said member states, including Saudi Arabia and other key Arab producers, were exercising restraint to stave off another price crisis.

"Steady increases in the production by independent oil producers have put strong pressure on OPEC and depressed its share in the world market," it said. "This has placed it in a difficult situation, in which it has to choose between safeguarding its market share or continuing its role as a residual producer to protect prices against a fresh collapse."

It said OPEC's crude supplies increased by only 300,000 b/d in 1994 and the growth would decline to 200,000 b/d in 1995 and 1996.

Experts said Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the UAE were expanding capacity in the hope demand for their oil would pick up after the year 2000 when supply sources from other areas began to decline.

The three countries currently have an extra capacity of more than two million b/d and the figure is set to surge after more expansion projects are completed in the year 2000, the experts said.

Saudi Arabia's capacity will reach around 10 million b/d while Kuwait plans to boost it to 3.5 million b/d and the UAE to three million b/d.

"In the near future, their coffers are not expected to see any large improvement as output and prices will likely remain stable," an oil analyst said. "But the situation will change when supplies from other producers start to recede. Gulf states could then regain their oil boom prestige."

Lebanon merchants told to price in local currency

BEIRUT (R) — The Lebanese government Monday ordered businesses to begin pricing consumer goods and services in Lebanese lira as of Dec. 2 in a bid to curtail the pegging of prices to the U.S. dollar.

"All retail shops should list prices of items, consumer goods and services of any kind in Lebanese lira," Economy Minister Yassin Jaber said in a statement.

Mr. Jaber said inspectors from the ministry's consumer protection agency will begin slapping summons against those who fail to abide by the new pricing policy.

"The stability of the Lebanese lira against foreign currencies in the past three years leaves no justification for further pricing in foreign currencies," Mr. Jaber told Reuters.

He said it was up to customer to pay either in lira or the equivalent sum in foreign currency.

Most shops began pricing in U.S. dollars during Lebanon's 1975-1990 civil war when the lira sank in value, reaching a low of about 2,750 in mid-1992.

But the local currency began a slow appreciation since Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri entered office in October 1992. It closed at 1,602 against the dollar on Monday.

Mr. Jaber said his decision came after he noticed the "insistence of some shops and restaurants to price and collect bills in U.S. dollars."

Unveiling its latest estimates, the ministry held talks with each financial institution carrying bad loans exceeding \$50 billion, the ministry revealed Tuesday.

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U.N. chief appeals to private sector

STRASBOURG (AFP) — U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali Tuesday addressed the European Parliament and called on the private sector worldwide to help build a "new social and democratic transitional order."

The speech, the first ever by Dr. Boutros-Ghali to the assembly, was given to mark the 50th anniversary of the United Nations.

Speaking in French to a plenary session in the eastern French city of Strasbourg Dr. Boutros-Ghali said business had to help in the effort for democracy, and for the creation of a "new social pact."

Commercial and financial companies... must make the interests of the general public and collective well-being a part of their economic strategies," he said. "The globalisation of the economy has to go hand-in-hand with a globalisation of democracy."

Horoscope

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 1995

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Avoid one in authority who is irate at this time and would not grant you any favour. Think before you speak and do not criticise others.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Find new data which can be applied to your own interests to make career activities better, be sure it is the acceptable kind.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Don't try to handle some business affair with a testy person today or you soon find yourself behind the proverbial eight ball.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Avoid being pressured into some agreement with another and feel safe both during the day and night for your to be prosperous.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Although your career activities may be going slowly, don't run after other interests or you will regret it later. Show you have poise and wisdom.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Get together with congenial friends and loved ones and have a fine time, provided you are not extravagant. Be patient and opportunities will come to you.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Be sure to use control today with those who dwell with you and maintain harmony. Show that you have a sense of humour.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Be careful you do nothing in the world of activity today which could be harmful to your health. Remain poised against all adversity.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You may not be thinking straight where money is concerned today, so be sure to double-check everything for complete accuracy.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Don't be soft-spoken if some situation arises which is not to your liking, or you can regret it. Caution is the keynote at this time.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) A practical affair of a personal nature should be further studied, so don't jump into it as yet or you could regret your decision at a later time.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You may find it difficult to gain some personal wish, so concentrate on other objectives. Be concerned with the practical.

Birthstone of November: Topaz — Tiger's Eye

THE Daily Crossword by Eugene Puffenberger

ACROSS

- 1 Inexpensive
- 5 Oil cartel letters
- 9 Belittling a king
- 14 Disney sci-fi film
- 15 Lampreys
- 16 Irregularly notched
- 17 More over
- 18 Having no heed
- 19 Sing like Bing
- 20 Pass a law
- 22 Cheap copies
- 24 Vest
- 26 Speak in a silly way
- 27 "Gil" (LeSage novel)
- 29 Eternity
- 30 Sphere
- 32 Constancy
- 37 Painter Paul
- 38 Thrusting weapon
- 39 Food scrap
- 40 "— of robins..."
- 41 Composer Salie
- 42 Fondness for candy
- 44 Family member
- 45 Cut short
- 46 Military acronym
- 47 Explorer La —
- 48 Jaunty
- 53 Made to be easily assembled
- 57 Funny O'Donnell
- 58 Tidal bore
- 59 Shed tears
- 61 Swoon
- 62 More mature
- 63 Memorable periods
- 64 Therefore
- 65 Chimney ducts
- 66 Alphabet run
- 67 Joined stalk

DOWN

- 1 Scatter
- 2 Cara or Papas
- 3 Closing measures
- 4 Plug-a-lug
- 5 Ref. work
- 6 Furtive look
- 7 Oxlike antelope
- 8 English novelist
- 9 Compute
- 10 Actor Flynn
- 11 Blunder
- 12 From a specified time
- 13 Camera part
- 21 Diacritical mark
- 23 Utters gently
- 25 Skater Babionia
- 28 Walk-clearing machine
- 30 Ersatz butter
- 31 What's left
- 32 "Little Women" name
- 33 Luge
- 34 Scarlett's home
- 35 OK city
- 36 "I saw Elba"
- 37 Rob
- 38 Rose essence
- 42 Auction word
- 43 Jutting rock
- 45 — dozen
- 47 Rock debris
- 48 Pitchers
- 50 Grenoble's river
- 51 Blockade
- 52 King of Judea
- 53 Cut made by a saw
- 54 Arrest
- 55 USSR secret police
- 56 Tide
- 60 Joe Paterno's coll.

Yesterday's puzzle solved:

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| J | A | V | A | S | K | I | S | C | O | M | O |
| I | C | E | R | S | H | A | L | T | O | V | E |
| B | R | I | C | K | L | A | Y | E | R | I | A |
| E | E | L | A | A | R | E | A | I | S | L | E |
| S | N | I | P | O | N | C | I | E | | | |
| S | I | A | T | E | N | A | U | D | I | T | O |
| L | A | G | O | S | A | R | T | I | E | M | A |
| O | P | E | C | T | R | I | E | D | A | T | N |
| W | I | N | K | H | E | A | R | S | K | E | E |
| R | I | A | B | B | I | T | S | S | T | E | R |
| R | U | S | E | B | A | I | E | R | | | |
| A | I | C | O | S | T | G | A | I | V | E | G |
| L | E | E | K | L | U | M | B | I | E | R | J |
| E | S | T | I | E | E | P | E | I | S | A | L |
| S | T | E | R | S | I | A | N | S | W | A | I |

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Peanuts

Andy Cap

Mutt'n' Jeff

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

TRAFC

RAPPE

AURBUE

GLUDEE

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here: A

Yesterday's Jumble: CRAZE FETID PENCIL TOFFEE

Answer: What the punch-drunk fighter considered his boxing career — THE DAZE OF HIS LIFE

THE SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Read 'em and weep

Japanese

Japan's financial institutions carrying bad loans exceeding \$50 billion, the ministry revealed Tuesday.

Singapore

Boeing plans to buy 777-300ER aircraft for its airlines.

Financial

Jordanian dinars in co-operation with Cairo Amman

LONDON EXCHANGE

| | |
|----------------------|--------------|
| U.S. dollar | 1.3546/56 |
| 1.4164/74 | |
| 1.5864/74 | |
| 1.1412/22 | |
| 29.11/15 | |
| 4.8572/22 | |
| 1594.9/6.4 | |
| 101.67/77 | |
| 6.6700/00 | |
| 6.2480/30 | |
| 5.4879/79 | |
| 1.4120/30 | |
| 0.7409/14 | |
| 7.7340/50 | |
| £ sterling (finance) | \$1.5580/90 |
| | \$385.40/385 |

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SLAUGHTER AT

FOR FARM CUTS TO YOUR

WELLS GALL

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Japanese banks have bad loans worth \$370b

OKYO (R) — Japan's beleaguered financial institutions are carrying bad loans worth \$370 billion, the ministry of finance revealed Tuesday.

The ministry unveiled its most detailed estimates ever of the bad loans weighing on the nation's financial industry, which it said totalled 7.39 trillion yen (\$370 billion) as of the end of September.

"We decided to disclose the data... as there was criticism that our previous estimates were too small," a ministry official told reporters.

The latest estimates were made after the ministry held direct talks with each financial institution.

Bad loans are made up of loans to bankrupt firms, non-performing loans and restructured loans. Non-performing loans are those on which interest payments are in arrears for six months or more, and restructured loans are those in which interest payments

have been cut or waived to help ailing firms get back on their feet.

The ministry said restructured loans totalled 12.96 trillion yen (\$128 billion) at the end of September.

The ministry earlier this year estimated Japan's total bad loans at 40 trillion yen (\$396 billion).

Concern about the stability of Japan's financial system has been mounting because of the collapse of four credit unions and a regional bank in the past year, and the scandal involving Daiwa Bank's New York branch which allegedly covered up U.S. securities trading losses of \$1.1 billion.

Those problems have caused the so-called Japan premium — the extra cost Japanese banks are paying to raise funds abroad.

Analysts said, however, they still believe the real bad-loan figure may be much higher and some said they would treat the ministry's latest figures with scepticism.

"I roughly estimate Japan's

bad loans at around 75 trillion yen (\$742 billion)," said Yukiko Ohara, a UBS securities analyst.

Analysts said it is common for Japanese banks to lend new money to ailing companies to help them pay interest on loans. We believe the data which we disclosed today is in line with reality," the official said.

This policy made it difficult to estimate the real amount of bad loans, Mr. Ohara said.

Leo O'Neil, president of Standard Poor's Corp (S.P.) said last month the U.S. credit rating agency estimated Japan's bad loans at 60 trillion yen (\$594 billion).

"Our analysts estimated the figure through conversations with banks," he said at the time, adding that the gap between the S.P. estimate and the ministry figure illustrated a lack of disclosure.

Despite the continuing concern of many analysts, the ministry officials said the latest data was the most

realistic picture of the current state of bad loans in Japan.

help them pay interest on loans. We believe the data which we disclosed today is in line with reality," the official said.

Singapore Airlines to buy Boeing planes at a cost of \$12.7b

SINGAPORE (R) — Singapore Airlines (SIA) said Tuesday it plans to buy 77 new Boeing 777-200B passenger planes over the next nine years at a total cost of around \$12.7 billion.

Of the 77 new aircraft, 34 are on "firm order" and 43 on option, SIA said in a statement.

The company chose the Boeing 777 in preference to Airbus aircraft from Airbus.

SIA managing director Cheong Choong Kong said the bids had been very close.

"We have spent considerable time studying the options and discussing them with the manufacturers," he said.

"Having made our choice, we are assured of our capacity growth over the next 10 years in the thriving Asia-Pacific region, where these aircraft will be deployed," Mr. Cheong said.

"As with previous orders in recent years, SIA expects to finance the purchase largely from its cash flow, but if necessary, the airline will re-

sort to borrowing or leasing," SIA said.

SIA also said that it was ordering 157 Trent engines, including 35 spares, for the planes from Britain's Rolls-Royce PLC.

Rolls-Royce said in a separate statement from London that its order was worth \$1.2 billion (\$1.87 billion).

The statement said the Rolls-Royce order covers 61 of the twin-engine planes. It said no decision has been taken on the engines for the remaining 16 planes.

Six of the firm orders for aircraft and 10 of the options are intended for Singapore Aircraft Leasing Enterprise (SALE), the leasing associate of SIA, based in Singapore.

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Low demand for gold keeps jewelry market in recession

MANY JEWELERS consider their market to be in a state of recession due to the low demand for gold since 1992. Some of them went as far as saying that it is the beginning of the downfall for the jewelry industry in Jordan as people are showing little interest in buying jewelry. Others attribute the recession to the reluctance of expatriates and foreign tourists to purchase gold.

Hassan Aqileh, a jeweler, said gold prices have remained stable for about three years. He noted that summer months are usually the main season for buying gold, especially the gold that is manufactured locally. Mr. Aqileh indicated that locally-manufactured gold enjoys lower labour cost and a low profit margin.

Ahmad Asha complained of the large number of jewellery shops in Amman and described the market as "not good" due to the stiff competition. He explained that a jeweler loses 200 fils per gramme of gold but the loss is compensated from the cost of workmanship. Mr. Asha indicated that the jewelry market was very weak due to the low number of expatriates who were the main buyers of gold in the past as they were the main source of large flows of foreign currencies to the country.

He criticised the Income Tax Department which insists on collecting 15 per cent income tax from jewelry shops when "we are not making a five per cent profit as a result of low prices."

Mahmoud Kalha said: "Most of our sales are for marriage occasions and some social activities whereas in the past it used to be for so many countless occasions." He indicated that there are some cases where a husband comes back to sell the jewellery he bought his bride two-months ago to settle financial obligations to other parties. Mr. Kalha said the current slack situation in the gold market has not been in such a condition since eight years. He further noted that there is no interest by investors to buy gold coins as a way of saving.

Maher Abu Sarah inherited the profession from his father, but he says, jewelry business is not profitable as before. "Had I invested my capital in a bank I would have

earned a better return than what I get from the jewelry business and without any effort," he said. He said the recession in the jewelry market has been affecting jewelers for the past four years despite the fact that jewelers are charging minimal cost for workmanship. Mr. Abu Sarah did not see any benefit from the Central Bank decision to fix the dinar exchange rate to the dollar pointing out that jewelers trade gold at the international price for the dollar.

Mohammad Haniyyeh regretted that nowadays anyone with a capital can enter the profession without referring to the association of goldsmiths and without having any experience in making and selling jewelry. He pointed out that more than 200 new jewelry shops opened in Amman suburbs over the past four years and noted that 90 per cent of those jewelers do not have any knowledge of the profession, the standard of which therefore gets affected negatively. Mr. Haniyyeh said some jewelers cannot determine the purity of gold presented to them by customers and that creates confusion and misunderstanding with clients.

RESPONDING TO demands by meat importers that the price of beef meat be raised due to higher prices at the countries of origin, the Ministry of Supply said it would not raise the price pending a study it was conducting to verify the real cost of importing beef meat from these countries. The ministry said the official price remains JD 2.800 per kilogramme for imported beef and anyone charging more would be fined for price violation.

Butchers complained last week that importers of beef were demanding higher prices and the ministry started investigating the issue. Elia Nuqul, head of the association of food-stuff traders, said beef prices increased by about JD 700 a tonne at the countries of origin in addition to an increase in freight charges from last October. As such, he added, it is imperative that prices be raised so as importers do not incur losses. Mr. Nuqul said routine procedures at various government institutions hinder the interests of importers who will be forced to take extra storage and cooling costs.

Financial Markets

General Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin
Date: 13/11/1995

| Currency | Bid | Offer |
|---------------|--------|--------|
| U.S. Dollar | 0.7080 | 0.7100 |
| British Pound | 1.1893 | 1.1948 |
| Deutsche Mark | 0.5007 | 0.5032 |
| Swiss Franc | 0.6262 | 0.6287 |
| French Franc | 0.1451 | 0.1458 |
| Japanese Yen | 0.7056 | 0.7071 |
| Dutch Guilder | 0.4472 | 0.4494 |
| Swedish Krona | 0.0444 | 0.0446 |
| Hellenic Lira | 0.0444 | 0.0446 |
| Belgian Franc | 0.0444 | 0.0446 |

Other Currencies
Date: 13/11/1995

| Currency | Bid | Offer |
|----------------|----------|----------|
| Israeli Sheqel | 1.8680 | 1.8780 |
| Lebanese Lira | 0.043350 | 0.044315 |
| Saudi Riyal | 0.1885 | 0.1898 |
| Kuwaiti Dinar | 2.5070 | 2.5070 |
| Qatari Riyal | 0.1932 | 0.1945 |
| Egyptian Pound | 0.2100 | 0.2200 |
| Omani Riyal | 1.8330 | 1.8410 |
| UAE Dirham | 0.1922 | 0.1933 |
| Czech Koruna | 0.2885 | 0.3077 |
| Cypriot Pound | 1.5365 | 1.5425 |

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Tuesday.

| One U.S. dollar | 1.3546/56 | Canadian dollar | 1.4164/74 |
|-----------------|-----------|--------------------|------------|
| | 1.5864/74 | Deutschemarks | 1.1412/22 |
| | 29.11/15 | Dutch guilders | 1.4872/22 |
| | 4.8872/22 | Swiss francs | 1594.9/6.4 |
| | 101.67/77 | French francs | 101.67/77 |
| | 6.6700/00 | Italian lire | 6.6700/00 |
| | 6.2480/30 | Japanese yen | 5.4879/79 |
| | 1.4120/30 | Swedish crowns | 1.4120/30 |
| | 0.7409/14 | Norwegian crowns | 0.7409/14 |
| | 7.7340/50 | Danish crowns | 7.7340/50 |
| | | Singapore dollars | |
| | | Australian dollars | |
| | | Hong Kong dollars | |

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Graf named player of the year

NEW YORK (R) — The WTA Tour rolled out two of its greatest former champions at Madison Square Garden on Monday to honour the best in women's tennis in 1995.

Retired greats Chris Evert and Martina Navratilova presided over the WTA Tour annual awards ceremony between matches at the season-ending championships, an event won a combined 12 times by the pair.

There were no surprises in the major awards categories with world number one Steffi Graf taking player of the year honours.

Despite injuries and personal problems, the German star won eight of the 10 tournaments she entered this year, including the French Open, Wimbledon and the U.S. Open. She compiled a 44-2 match record, heading into the season finale.

There could be only one choice for comeback player of the year and Monica Seles, who was forced to pull out of the tournament with tendinitis of the left knee and a sprained ankle, flew to New York to accept the award.

After more than two and a

half years away from the game following her horrific on court stabbing in Hamburg in 1993, Seles returned in August and won her first tournament back — the Canadian Open. She then cruised all the way to the U.S. Open final before falling to Graf in three sets.

"I wish I was playing this week," Seles told the crowd.

"I'm looking forward to seeing you in 1996 and playing some great tennis."

Lest there be any doubt about how much tournament organisers miss Seles, here, her picture with a banner headline that reads "welcome back Monica" adorns both the official programme and draw sheet for the showcase event.

Tuesday had even been designated "welcome back Monica night" before her withdrawal late last week.

Doubles team of the year went to American Gigi Fernandez and Natasha Zvereva of Belarus, winners of the French and U.S. Opens and runners-up at Wimbledon and the Australian Open.

Nineteen-year-old American Chanda Rubin was named most improved player.

Rubin cracked the top 20 this year and is now 13th in the rankings. She qualified for the this week's elite 16-player field for the first time.

Most improved newcomer went to Swiss prodigy Martina Hingis, who turned professional last year and is already ranked 16th in the world.

Women's tennis rankings

| | |
|-----------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Steffi Graf (Ger) | 383.27 pts |
| 2. Monica Seles (USA) | special decision |
| 3. Conchita Martinez (Spa) | 251.14 |
| 4. Arantxa Sanchez (Spa) | 234.00 |
| 5. Kimiko Date (Jpn) | 169.00 |
| 6. Gabriela Sabatini (Arg) | 167.10 |
| 7. Mary Pierce (Fra) | 166.31 |
| 8. Magdalena Maleeva (Bul) | 149.63 |
| 9. Mary Joe Fernandez (USA) | 134.35 |
| 10. Lindsay Davenport (USA) | 131.93 |
| 11. Jana Novotna (Cze) | 131.50 |
| 12. Anke Huber (Ger) | 110.55 |
| 13. Chanda Rubin (USA) | 91.63 |
| 14. Brenda Schultz (Ned) | 87.52 |
| 15. Natasha Zvereva (Bel) | 83.43 |
| 16. Martina Hingis (Svi) | 70.54 |
| 17. Naoko Sawamatsu (Jpn) | 69.21 |
| 18. Amy Frazier (USA) | 66.17 |
| 19. Amanda Coetzer (RSA) | 62.71 |
| 20. Lisa Raymond (USA) | 59.81 |

UEFA head disagrees with Havelange on Nigeria

PRAGUE (R) — UEFA chief Lennart Johansson said on Monday that no decision had been taken to transfer the 1997 World Youth Soccer Championship to Nigeria despite reports that FIFA head Joao Havelange promised the African country the event last week.

Johansson, also a FIFA vice-president, said he only knew about Havelange's trip to Nigeria from the papers, and that such a decision could not be taken until the political situation in Nigeria stabilises.

"The only thing I know is that we have decided to go to Malaysia in 1997. We took a decision already. If anything is to be changed it has to go back to the executive committee," he said during a FIFA symposium in Prague.

"Until the situation stabilises, we should avoid sending young people somewhere, if for medical reasons, or from a security point of view, there are risks," he added.

Havelange made a four-day trip to Nigeria last week during which he met the country's military ruler General Sani Abacha and was awarded a traditional chieftaincy after saying they may be given the 1997 tournament.

He also apologised for FIFA's last-minute decision to prevent the African country from holding the finals in March, after being informed there were outbreaks of cholera and meningitis at two of the venues due to stage matches.

Havelange's visit occurred before the execution of nine dissidents in Nigeria led to the country's suspension from the British Commonwealth and the recalling of ambassadors by the European Union and the United States.

The lack of communication surrounding the visit could further strain relations between Havelange and Johansson.

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Utah Jazz's (32) Karl Malone goes up to pass a round during first half action in Toronto November 13. Utah won 103-100 (Reuters photo)

Jazz beat Raptors, Dallas over Vancouver

TORONTO (R) — John Stockton scored 15 of his 29 points in the third quarter and added two late free throws that snapped a tie as the Utah Jazz defeated the slumping Toronto Raptors, 103-100, on Monday.

With the score tied 99-99, Stockton hit a pair of free throws to give the Jazz the lead with 1:33 remaining.

Then Alvin Robertson hit on of two free throws to pull the Raptors within a point, but Utah's Adam Keefe made a layup for a 103-100 advantage with 5.5 seconds to go.

Toronto's Tracy Murray missed a three-pointer at the buzzer, sending the expansion club to its sixth straight loss after a win in its first-ever game.

"It's the little things that are killing us, but we're going to be okay," Murray said. "We've got to keep our heads cool at the end of the game. We never quit, that's one thing I'm happy with."

Robertson and Willie Anderson each scored 22 points for Toronto.

In Vancouver, Scott Brooks scored five of his seven points in a fourth-quarter run and Jason Kidd added 26 points as the Dallas Mavericks overcame a horrible shooting performance to defeat the Vancouver Grizzlies, 94-89.

Dallas led, 70-69, with 9:25 to play before Brooks nailed a three-pointer with 9:04 remaining. George McCloud and Jim Jackson made two free throws apiece to make it 77-69.

Bryant Reeves scored a

basket to pull the Grizzlies within six before Brooks capped the run with a pair of free throws to give Dallas a 79-71 edge.

Kidd hit a pair of baskets in a 9-2 run late in the fourth quarter that put the game out of reach.

Dallas shot 27.7 per cent from the field, making just 26-of-94 shots.

Greg Anthony scored 19 points and Byron Scott added 17 for Vancouver, which has lost five straight after starting the season with two wins.

U.S. team goes coach hunting

FOXBORO, Massachusetts (R) — Major League Soccer's New England Revolution, looking to sign a big name coach, sent general manager Brian O'Donovan to Lisbon on Monday to speed up the hunt.

O'Donovan will watch Wednesday's Portugal-Ireland European Championship qualifying match and hopes to interview coaching candidates — including Ireland manager Jack Charlton — for the 1996 inaugural season of the U.S. League.

"We're going to come up with the best coach available," said O'Donovan. "Money will not stand in our way. We're not going to spend a million dollars but we want to win and that (selecting a coach) is where it all starts."

"He (Charlton) has been courted by us," O'Donovan said. "Anyone of his calibre would be. I don't plan on talking to him any time before the match, nobody in his

right mind would. It is far too important but I will talk to him at some point."

Charlton, a member of England's 1966 World Cup champions, said last month he would quit as Ireland manager the moment the team were eliminated from the European Championship.

But on Monday Charlton, who guided Ireland into the 1990 and 1994 World Cup finals. Adopted a different line.

"No matter what happens here I'm going to sit down and think about it," he told reporters in Portugal ahead of the Group-Six match.

"I never said I was definitely leaving. I said I would consider it. And it certainly won't be the press that drives me out, it will be the people of Ireland."

The revolution have acknowledged targeting a trio of candidates — Charlton, Ossie Ardiles and Toni Jose Da Conceicao.

O'Donovan said he also hoped to meet Toni on the

trip. Ardiles, a member of Argentina's 1978 and 1982 World Cup squads, was fired as coach of Mexican first division club Guadalajara two weeks ago.

Toni, who played with Benfica of Portugal from 1968-82, had managerial stints with Benfica, Bordeaux of France and Spain's Sevilla, who fired him three weeks ago.

O'Donovan said season tickets for the inaugural MLS campaign, which begin on April 6, had been "selling at a good clip" with about 1,500 tickets sold so far for 1996.

"We have a very savvy bunch of fans in the Boston area," O'Donovan said, "and many know that this is the last chance to support a national soccer league in this country."

Charlton may be a front-runner for the position in the mind of Revolution management due to the large Irish population of metropolitan Boston.

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SPORTS IN BRIEF

Date gets Wimbledon revenge

NEW YORK (AFP) — Kimiko Date came from a set down to beat Jana Novotna and avenge her Wimbledon quarter-final defeat in the WTA Tour Championship at Madison Square Garden here Monday. The first Japanese player over to reach the semi-finals at this year's French Open won 5-7, 6-3, 6-4 in two hours and now plays Anke Huber, who surprised Australian Open champion Mary Pierce of France in the quarter-finals. The German, who won her first tournament of the year at Leipzig last month, took exactly 60 minutes to win 6-2, 6-3 against an error-prone opponent who also lost in the first round in Philadelphia last week. Novotna surprised Date by repeatedly coming to the net in the first set but the Japanese adapted and if her passing shots did not score she could rely on Novotna missing her volleys. "The last time I played her in Wimbledon she didn't come to the net that much," Date said.

Dynamo Kiev to ask for ban reduction

KIEV (R) — Dynamo Kiev will appeal to UEFA for a reduction in their three-year European ban. "We feel insulted by an unfair decision and will prove that we are fully in the right," club spokesman Olexy Semenenko said on Monday. "We do not want this matter to be re-examined, we are asking for the suspension to be reduced from three years to one. We intend to make our appeal in the spring so that next autumn we will be able to take part in European competition. UEFA suspended Dynamo from European competitions and banned two club executives for life in September after the referee for the Champions League match against Panathinaikos said club officials had offered him \$30,000. Dynamo won 1-0. The club denied the charges, but UEFA upheld the suspension after a five-hour appeal hearing.

Eriksson signs for Subaru

PARIS (AFP) — The 1995 Asia-Pacific Rally champion, Kenneth Eriksson, has signed for the Subaru World Rally team until the end of 1997. Subaru said that the Swedish star and his co-driver Staffan Parmander were in England last Thursday to sign a contract. They will contest in both the World and the Asia-Pacific Rally Championships. As well as taking the 1995 Asia-Pacific title, Eriksson also won the Australian and Swedish rounds of the World Championship and he currently lies third overall. He will join up at Subaru with Scotland's Colin McRae who will battle against Spain's Carlos Sainz later this month for this year's world rally title in the closing round in Britain.

Hearts sign Swedish striker

STOCKHOLM (AFP) — Swedish striker Hans Eklundsson has signed a one-year contract with Scottish Premier Division side Hearts. The Swedish TT news agency said Monday. Eklundsson had played three games for the Edinburgh side on a short-term contract and did enough to impress manager Jim Jeffries. His arrival coincided with a sharp reversal of fortune for Hearts who were bottom of the league when he came and two wins and a draw later are now in mid-table.

Don't count me out yet: Charlton

LISBON (AFP) — Republic of Ireland manager Jack Charlton insisted Monday that he will not immediately quit as manager if his side are eliminated from the European Championships here on Wednesday. A month ago, when Ireland earned a reprieve by escaping home 2-1 against group six minnows Latvia, Charlton said: "The moment we don't qualify I will probably walk away. No, forget the word probably." The Football Association of Ireland (FAI) keep denying they have already started to draw up a shortlist of possible replacements. Bookmakers are quoting Wimbledon's Joe Kinnear and Millwall's Mick McCarthy, the former Ireland captain, as joint favourites. And Kenny Dalglish, Blackburn's former boss and now director of football, has also come into the frame. Dalglish attended Ireland's Footballer of the Year dinner in Dublin last night but refused to comment on speculation linking him with the job.

Ince facing showdown with Moratti

LONDON (AFP) — Paul Ince could spark a transfer scramble after Inter Milan manager Roy Hodgson said here Monday that the England star will meet the Inter president this week to discuss his future. Ince is set for talks with Massimo Moratti within the next few days and unless the former Manchester United midfielder spells out his commitment to the Italian giants he could be on his way back to English football. Englishman Hodgson, manager of Inter and Switzerland, arrived in London for Wednesday's international friendly against England at Wembley, saying: "The president told me he was going to meet Paul Ince in the time that I am away. I expect what he will want to hear is that Paul is desperate to stay with us; that Paul is desperate to help Inter win things and wants to pledge his soul, if you like, to the Inter cause."



Thomas Muster

Muster seeks No. 1 spot in season finale

FRANKFURT (AFP) — Austria's French Open holder Thomas Muster has the chance to round off a great year with the number one spot in world tennis should he win the ATP Tour Championships here this week.

Muster, 28, could use his legendary drive and fighting spirit to dethrone American Pete Sampras, who achieved near perfection for himself in 1995 with a third successive Wimbledon crown and then went on to defeat major rival Andre Agassi for his third U.S. Open title.

The Austrian though has shown after years of playing mainly on clay — due in part to a career-threatening knee injury incurred in a car accident with a drunken driver in Florida in 1989 — he has the game to also cause a fright on other surfaces.

"I had an awfully good clay court season, I want to see what is possible on other surfaces," he said. The left-hander, renowned for his hardworking ethos, added: "There's no luck in this game. When you work hard, you get a payoff."

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NORTH
♠ Q 10 8
♥ 7 8
♦ K 5
♣ K J 10 9 5 3

WEST
♠ A 7 5 4 2
♥ K 9 3
♦ Q 10 2
♣ A 8

EAST
♠ 6 3
♥ 7 4 2
♦ J 7 6 4 3
♣ Q 7 2

SOUTH
♠ K J 9
♥ A J 10 9 5
♦ A 8 8
♣ 6 4

The bidding:

WEST NORTH EAST SOUTH
1♠ 2♠ Pass 3NT
Pass Pass Pass

Opening lead: Four of ♠

The outcome of the play is often decided by a race between the declarer and the defender for the tricks required to make or break

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WHICH SUIT?

the contract. That can hinge on which suit declarer tries to develop. Sometimes, it is a guess. But there are occasions when the bidding tells the story.

With an aceless hand and shabby values in the major suits, North was a little light for a vulnerable two-over-one overall. South's jump to game is beyond reproach.

West led a fourth-best spade, and declarer was faced with a problem at the very first trick: to win in dummy and take the heart finesse, or in hand and go after clubs. With only one high honor missing in hearts, it might seem logical to tackle that suit first, but consider the auction.

For the vulnerable opening bid,

West surely has a five-card suit headed by the ace, the ace of clubs and the king of hearts as well as either the queen of clubs or queen of diamonds. If declarer were to take the heart finesse and it loses, West would clear spades by playing ace and another would be poised to defeat the contract when in with the ace of clubs. Meanwhile declarer can come to only eight tricks — two spades, four hearts and two diamonds.

That means declarer has to rely on the club suit. The opening lead is won in hand and a club is led. Should West follow low, declarer goes in with the king of clubs, which wins, and then reverts to hearts since the king of clubs is the ninth trick. It doesn't help if West rises with the ace of clubs and clears spades. Now declarer can take a second club finesse safely and establish the club suit for the contract — two spades, one heart, two diamonds and four clubs.

European Soccer Championships

Nothing short of victory good for Dutch

LONDON (R) — The Netherlands, winners in 1988 and whose club side Ajax Amsterdam are the best in Europe, will not qualify for the European Championship finals if they lose their final group match at home to Norway on Wednesday.

On a final, decisive night of group games that the organisers' complicated qualifying system looks set to dominate, the Dutch depend entirely on themselves. Even a draw will not be enough to see their Ajax-based national team through.

Of the other former champions still involved in the competition, two have already secured berths in the 16-team finals in England next June: Russia, who as the Soviet Union were the first winners in 1960, and Spain, the next in 1964.

The rest — 1968 champions Italy, twice winners Germany (1972 and 1980), the Czech Republic who won it as Czechoslovakia in 1976, France, victorious in 1984, and current title-holders Denmark — should also make it.

But some of them will depend on good-enough records as second-placed teams in their groups to avoid the play-off in Liverpool next month between the two worst for the right to join the eight group winners, six best runners-up and hosts England in the finals.

In the tight group five, the Czech Republic should beat Luxembourg to notch up a total of 21 points. A draw would give Norway the same number but put them second because their head-to-head record favours the Czechs.

If the Netherlands beat Norway, the Norwegians will go out despite ending with the same number of points as the Dutch — the sides drew in Oslo a year ago — unless the Czechs do not beat Luxembourg and finish in third place.

Such complications dominate all the groups, even Group

Three which has one team fewer.

Switzerland, their programme of games already over, are through although it remains to be seen if it will be as group winners or a second-placed team. This depends on Turkey's last game in Sweden on Wednesday.

Germany meet Bulgaria at home in a Group Seven clash that will merely decide who finishes top, a position at present held by the Bulgarians on goal difference.

Bulgarian trainer Dimitar Penev warned his German counterpart Bert Vogts against over-confidence.

"If Mr. Vogts thinks that we are afraid of the Germans then he is overestimating himself. We have consistently proved our class since the 1994 World Cup in the U.S. and shown that we can keep up with the Germans," he said from the Bulgarians' training camp in Austria.

Bulgaria, who beat Germany in the World Cup quarter-finals and in their first Group Seven clash in Sofia in June, plan to attack, Penev said. "We will not change course. We have done well with this so far."

France are at home to Israel in Group One looking for revenge over one of the sides — Bulgaria were the others — responsible for preventing them from qualifying for the 1994 World Cup finals.

But even if they lose again they will finish second in the group because of their better head-to-head record against Slovakia.

Italy are also sure of finishing in the top two in Group Four but could be runners-up to Croatia, while Denmark have already secured second place to Spain in Group Two. The question will be how they compare with the other runners-up.

Prost in line for possible return

ADELAIDE (R) — Former four-time world champion Alain Prost has been short-listed as a possible temporary replacement for injured Finnish driver Mika Hakkinen. McLaren team boss Ron Dennis said on Tuesday.

But Dennis said he was optimistic Hakkinen would recover from head injuries sustained in a high-speed crash last Friday before the start of the 1996 season in March.

"We are working with Alain Prost at the moment and there is a possibility he could become an integral part of our team, some possibility he could race, but that's very, very premature," Dennis



Alain Prost

told reporters.

"I am optimistic Mika will be in a condition to race in the first race (of the 1996 season)," Dennis told a press conference at Royal Adelaide Hospital, where Hakkinen remained in a serious

but stable condition on Tuesday.

Prost will probably join McLaren as a test driver, Dennis said, adding that the 40-year-old Frenchman could come into contention if Hakkinen is ruled out.

Hakkinen, 27, whose condition was initially described as critical, suffered severe concussion after crashing his car on Friday during qualifying for last Sunday's Australian Grand Prix in Adelaide.

Steelers beat Browns 20-3

PITTSBURGH (R) — Rookie receiver Kordell Stewart took a turn at quarterback and threw a touchdown pass and Eric Pegrum rushed for 112 yards as the Pittsburgh Steelers beat the Cleveland Browns, 20-3, to take control of the AFC Central Division on Monday.

Norm Johnson kicked two field goals and Neil O'Donnell added a fourth-quarter touchdown pass for the Steelers (6-4), who won their third straight game and moved two games in front of Cleveland, Cincinnati and Houston. Pittsburgh is the only team in the division above .500.

The Browns (4-6), just days after the announcement by owner Art Modell that the franchise will move to Baltimore, appeared as flat as they were last week in a 37-10 home loss to Houston.

Stewart, who has played mostly at receiver

for the Steelers, surprisingly lined up behind centre with the game scoreless in the second quarter and Pittsburgh at the Cleveland 2.

Stewart rolled right and was cut off. With no receivers open, he sprinted back left and looked as if he was going to run, but he pulled up and lofted a pass to Ernie Mills drifting across the back of the end zone.

Stewart, who also caught two passes for 21 yards, picked up a key first down in the fourth quarter when he ran 11 yards an option. Five plays later, O'Donnell hit Yancey Thigpen with a nine-yard scoring toss over cornerback Antonio Langham for a 20-3 lead with 8:47 to play.

The Browns managed just 120 yards, including 10 with no first downs in the second half. Cleveland was 1-of-10 on third-down conversions and was sacked four times.

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Christopher seeks to end deadlock in Bosnia talks

WRIGHT PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Ohio (Agencies) — U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher sought Tuesday to break an apparent deadlock in Bosnian peace talks by meeting face to face with Balkan leaders camped here since Nov. 1.

"These talks could go one way or the other right now," State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns told reporters.

"The parties need to make fundamental decisions," notably on the territorial division of Bosnia-Herzegovina, he said.

U.S. mediators and their "contact group" counterparts from Britain, France, Germany and Russia were still aiming for a "comprehensive peace agreement," he added.

"At this point, we do not anticipate a halfway agreement or taking a break," Mr. Burns said, adding that talks

might be difficult to restart if a break were called at this stage.

Mr. Christopher was planning to spend a full day in meetings at this mid-western air base with presidents Alija Izetbegovic of Bosnia, Franjo Tudjman of Croatia and Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia, who represents the breakaway Bosnian Serbs.

"Today's core issues are territories, Sarajevo, elections and the constitution," a senior State Department official said.

"The Serbs and the Bosnian government are taking irreconcilable positions on territory right now," the New York Times reported Tuesday, quoting an official close to the negotiations.

After three and a half years of war in Bosnia, the warring parties now each control roughly 50 per cent of the country, but linking up their respective zones is proving a

major challenge.

Bosnian Croat radio reported Monday that Croats in the Bosnian delegation had threatened to walk out of the talks if the Serbs refused to hand over control of the Posavina corridor, a narrow strategic area in the north of the country linking the eastern and western part of Serb-held territory.

Mr. Burns acknowledged that the question of the Posavina corridor and establishment of a route to link up the Muslim-held enclave of Gorazde, in eastern Bosnia, with the rest of federation-held territory remained two of the main territorial disputes.

The status of Sarajevo is also at stake.

The Serbs, who control part of the capital and lay siege on the rest of it, are said to have rejected a plan to unify the city along federal lines.

Constitutional talks are focused on how to provide self-rule for breakaway Serbs within a sovereign and federal Bosnia-Herzegovina.

But "territorial issues are tougher than constitutional issues," a senior U.S. official acknowledged.

After a briefing by U.S. mediators here, Mr. Christopher was holding a series of meetings with the Balkan presidents, followed by lunch with "contact group" representatives.

Officials suggested the talks might go on until late Tuesday when Mr. Christopher is scheduled to fly on to Japan where he will take part in a Pacific Rim summit, in Osaka.

"It is very conceivable that the talks (between Balkan leaders) can go on past this weekend," Mr. Burns said.

Mr. Christopher would be doing his best to push things forward, adding that Balkan leaders have "got to deal with (the) fundamental issues and make the fundamental compromises to get a final peace agreement."

"We have created our diplomatic bosphorus at Wright-Patterson with the intention of convincing the parties that now is the time to make peace," he added.

In Geneva, the U.N. refugee agency Tuesday accused the Muslim-Croat Federation of "ethnic engineering" by carrying out a policy of forced repopulation in northwestern Bosnia.

Much of Bosnia's massive population of displaced Croats and Muslims are being forced to move into territory in northwestern Bosnia newly taken from rebel Serbs. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) spokesman Ron Redmond said.



Two young boys help their family in gathering firewood in the central Bosnian town of Travnik (AFP photo)

Thousands celebrate Women's Day in Iran

TEHRAN (AFP) — Thousands of women gathered at a square in Tehran on Tuesday to celebrate "Women's Day" in Iran as President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani urged them to work to achieve equal status with men.

The Women's Day, which is also "Mother's Day" in Iran, falls on the birthday of the Prophet Mohammad's daughter, Fatima Zahra, who is highly revered by Shiite Muslims as a symbol of courage and virtue.

The women, clad in the black chador and wearing colourful headbands inscribed with Fatima's name or her various titles, sat peacefully and in a festive mood around a 100-metre tower in the middle of Azadi Square.

Choirs of young girls performed religious songs and speeches were delivered by women officials on the "improved lot of Iranian women" after the 1979 Islamic revolution.

In an acrobatic show, a female member of the volunteer Basij Islamic militia, fully dressed in a black chador, clambered down the Azadi tower with a rope.

A U.S.-made C-130 plane, piloted by a woman, also streaked over the square and landed in a nearby airfield.

Speaking to the crowd, Mr. Rafsanjani referred to the performances "normally reserved for men as a proof of the opportunities provided

for women in Iran and the extent of Muslim women's abilities."

He said the revolution which toppled the pro-Western Shah had "saved women from the threat of immoral" Western influences and guided them on the path "to real" progress and a meritorious status.

"We should take good points from the West with respect women — like equal opportunities for education, work, etc. — and reject the bad ones, such as corruption and moral laxness," the president said urging women to "take advantage of the opportunities."

He said all of the girls in Iran were being provided with schooling, except for a "few in the Sunni-Muslim community," which is a minority in Iran and often refuses to send its girls to school on religious grounds.

"When it comes to progress, Islam has left the road open for women. But when it comes to promiscuity, our religion is opposed to it."

Despite certain limitations imposed on women after the revolution — such as the obligatory veil and forbidding them from seeking careers in singing and as a judge, Iranian women have had more educational and professional opportunities.

Women account for nearly half of the around one million university students and 35 per cent of the government employees.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Egypt arrests 62 Brotherhood students

CAIRO (AFP) — Police have arrested 62 students accused of leading demonstrations calling for the overthrow of the Egyptian government, a judicial source said Tuesday. "These demonstrations are part of actions by the banned Muslim Brotherhood aiming to incite the masses and overthrow the government in power," the source said. The arrests were made over the past few days after demonstrations drew thousands of Muslim students at the universities of Cairo, Alexandria and Zagazig. The demonstrators were protesting against the military court trial of 81 Brotherhood members as well as the ban on dozens of Muslim fundamentalist students wanting to run in university elections. The 62 students are accused of having "30,000 pamphlets inciting hate against the government and for provoking their colleagues." The Brotherhood, banned since 1954 but tolerated by the government as a religious organisation since the 1970s, has accused the government of arresting scores of its members in a recent crackdown to prevent them from participating in legislative elections on Nov. 29.

Rabin's name wrongly spelt on new signs

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Tel Aviv City hall said Tuesday it would change signs put up at the new Yitzhak Rabin Square because the slain prime minister's name had been wrongly spelt in English. The former Kings of Israel Square was formally renamed on Sunday at a mass memorial in the same place where Mr. Rabin was shot down by a Jewish fanatic on Nov. 4 at a tribute attended by 250,000 people. But Mr. Rabin's family were shocked to see that his surname had been spelt with two "b"s in English alongside his name in Hebrew, which has a very different script.

Man stoned to death in Iran for adultery

TEHRAN (AFP) — A man was stoned to death after being convicted of adultery and committing homosexual acts in western Iran, a newspaper reported Tuesday. Mehdi Barazandeh, a dervish (member of a Muslim religious brotherhood), was executed in a graveyard in the city of Hamedan on Sunday for committing "several acts of adultery and the abominable act of sodomy" with a man, the daily Jomhuri Islami said. Under Islamic law, convicted adulterers or homosexuals are buried in earth up to their waist and adulteresses to their armpits before being stoned to death by a crowd. If they manage to free themselves, they escape death. The last such punishment reported was in March 1994.

German police stop Algerian from speaking

BONN (AFP) — German police on Tuesday prevented Rabah Kabir, head of the foreign branch of the banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), from speaking at a press conference in Bonn. Police allowed him to attend the conference, alongside two leftist Algerian leaders — Socialist Forces Front (FFS) chief Hocine Ait-Ahmad and the representative of a small Trotskyite group, Louisa Hanoune — provided he did not speak. Mr. Kabir, 37, lives in Germany in Euskirchen, near Bonn. He has requested political asylum. Authorities are examining his request but have banned him from political activity since March 1994.

'Messenger of God' escapes death sentence

SHARJAH (AFP) — An Iranian who had faced execution for proclaiming himself a "messenger of God" was instead condemned on Tuesday to one year in jail when an Islamic appeals court overturned his death sentence. The court in Sharjah said Hassan Gholam Hussein Dana, 36, who was given the death penalty in August for apostasy, "was not an apostate because he had not renounced Islam." Mr. Dana will be deported after he completes his jail term. His lawyer Abdul Hamid Gharib said the sentence was imposed for "slandering" the authorities. Sharjah is one of the seven emirates in the United Arab Emirates.



RUINED HOME: Lebanese youth look at the ruins of a house destroyed on Monday in an Israeli air raid in Naameh, about 20 kilometres south of Beirut. A Palestinian group said at least two of its civilian members were killed and eight others were wounded in the attack (AFP photo).

Assad, Musa discuss peace; Khaddam says Syria serious

DAMASCUS (Agencies) — Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa met President Hafez Al Assad in Damascus on Tuesday as Syria reaffirmed its desire for peace talks with Israel.

Presidential spokesman Joubran Kourieh said Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa was present at the meeting at the presidential palace in the Syrian capital.

Mr. Musa, who accompanied President Hosni Mubarak at the funeral of murdered Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in Jerusalem last week, told reporters he was carrying a message to Mr. Assad from Mr. Mubarak "as part of the continued consultations between Syria and Egypt."

Syrian Vice President Abdul Halim Khaddam, in remarks published by the official daily Tishreen, said Damascus was still committed to peace talks with Israel. "Despite all this (differences with Israel) Syria is committed to continue the peace process in accordance with the principles on which the process was based," Mr. Khaddam said.

Syria's peace talks with Israel are stalled over the fate of the Golan Heights, seized by Israel in 1967, future ties and security arrangements.

The last round of negotiations was held in Washington

in June when army chiefs of both countries met to discuss security arrangements which would back up a proposed Israeli withdrawal from the Golan.

Mr. Khaddam said Israel's demands for the setting up of an early warning post in the Golan contradicted the principles of security arrangements agreed upon by Syria and Israel in coordination with the United States.

"The Israelis refused to make clear acceptance of withdrawal and insisted on having a presence for themselves (on the Golan) through the warning posts," he said.

Syria wants a full Israeli pullback from the Golan and says security arrangements should be equal and balanced on both sides of the border.

Israel says it will not reveal the extent of a withdrawal until Damascus agrees to establish full normal ties.

Mr. Musa's visit comes before an important tour of the region by U.S. Middle East peace envoy Dennis Ross expected to take place next week.

Mr. Khaddam also accused Israel of wanting to dominate the Middle East and condemn Arabs for "helping the Jewish state achieve its goal."

"Israel is aiming to dominate the region, put its hands on its resources and suppress

Arab nationalism," Mr. Khaddam said in Tishreen.

"It is disconcerting to see that the Arabs, in participating in the economic summits of Casablanca and Amman, want to facilitate the Israeli goal while it still occupies Arab land and suppresses rights," he said.

Mr. Khaddam also criticised the Palestinians and Jordan for striking peace deals with Israel. "These accords reinforce the Zionist project," he asserted.

"In concluding the Oslo accord (on Palestinian autonomy), Israel received the recognition of its existence, its security, the right to control occupied Palestinian territories and an indirect recognition of Jerusalem as its capital, liquidating the Palestinian cause," he added.

Mr. Khaddam also accused Israel of wanting to push Palestinians into Iraq and seize control of oil fields in Iraq and Arab Gulf states.

"Israel wants to establish a regional order and wants to lead it to place its hands on Iraqi petroleum and take control of oil from Gulf states and wants to install in Iraq Palestinians from Palestine," he said.

"The Zionist movement made the decision during a conference in New York in

(Continued on page 7)

NATO leadership crisis worsens

MADRID (AFP) — The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's (NATO) search for a new leader was left looking increasingly desperate on Tuesday as France made it clear that the only declared candidate was unacceptable and the European allies struggled to come up with credible alternative names.

"It's a mess," Italian Foreign Minister Susanna Agnelli said. "There is enormous confusion."

Speaking at a meeting of the Western European Union, where the succession to the disgraced Willy Claes as NATO secretary-general dominated corridor discussions, Ms. Agnelli admitted: "A candidate accepted by everyone does not exist."

NATO was thrown into disarray on Friday when the United States pressured former Dutch Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers to withdraw from the race, after he had

been strongly backed in Europe.

That left former Danish Foreign Minister Uffe Ellemann-Jensen as the only horse in the race, but he appears to have failed to overcome French objections, prompted by Danish criticism of its nuclear testing programme in the South Pacific.

"He's a candidate. There are certainly other possibilities," French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette told AFP on Tuesday when asked to comment on the Dane's bid.

Mr. De Charette also warned that the vacuum at the top of the alliance could seriously affect its functioning as it prepares to send a 60,000-strong peace force to Bosnia to police an eventual peace deal.

"The multinational peace force in Bosnia cannot be realised seriously if there is

not a secretary general," Mr. De Charette said.

NATO ambassadors are this week due to begin putting the finishing touches to the plan for the peace implementation force.

Former British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd was tipped as a potential replacement for Mr. Claes who would have won broad backing in the alliance. But having taken up a lucrative post in the City of London, he is reported to be reluctant to take on the NATO job.

German Defence Minister Volker Ruehe, another widely respected figure, has also declined to apply because of his ambitions in German politics.

Other names mentioned include two EU commissioners, Hans Van den Broek, and Sir Leon Brittan. Both, however, have indicated they are not interested in the job.

Mestiri holds talks with Rabbani

KABUL (AFP) — U.N. envoy Mahmood Mestiri held talks Tuesday with Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani on brokering a peace pact for war-torn Afghanistan, amid growing skepticism here about the success of his mission.

Mr. Mestiri discussed the transfer of power to "other individuals or groups" with Mr. Rabbani, but no progress was made, an official source said.

"The president declared his readiness to transfer power, now it depends whether Mestiri can convince the other groups," a Defence Ministry source said.

Analysts said deadlock continued on the contentious issue as the president has repeatedly offered to stand down on several conditions which the opposition Islamic Taliban movement has roundly rejected.

The black-turbaned "religious students" have been besieging Kabul for the past month in a bid to topple Rabbani's three-year-old administration and impose Islamic law on the whole country.

They reject a ceasefire before Mr. Rabbani quits un-

conditionally and have vowed to take over the capital.

The movement, which sprang up in the Koranic schools of southern Afghanistan last year, has already captured large parts of the country, leaving the government desperately defending the capital.

Mr. Mestiri's expected meetings with acting Foreign Minister Najibullah Lafrai and possibly former Defence Minister Ahmad Shah Masoud did not take place during his short flying visit here.

Mr. Mestiri left for Islamabad in the late afternoon after only an hour-long stay during which observers here said his reception was "cool."

He did not comment on his talks with Mr. Rabbani before leaving.

Afghan officials and residents are skeptical of the usefulness and results of his nearly two-year-old mission to bring peace to Afghanistan by acting as an intermediary between the warring factions vying for control of the government.

"The Afghan people have lost all hope and confidence in Mestiri's mission," a Defence Ministry source here

said. "He has prolonged his mission for so long that they have lost confidence and patience in his peace drive."

"In fact, sometimes when he comes here it acts as a signal for more fighting as all sides in the conflict see the U.N. is unable to do anything, so they decide instead to battle for more ground," the source added.

People in the streets of the capital — which is hemmed in on three sides by the frontlines of the Taliban who are attempting to topple the Rabbani government — also lack confidence in the United Nations mission.

A moneychanger here said the value of the local currency had dropped on news of the arrival of Mestiri.

"The Afghani was worth 5,100 to the dollar this morning, but after we heard Mestiri was arriving it immediately dropped to 5,500," he said.

Mr. Mestiri began his peace drive in February 1994, attempting to settle differences between the government and the forces loyal to former Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and his ally Uzbek warlord Rashid Dostum.

COLUMN

Pakistan leader's aircraft engine explodes

SYDNEY (R) — The aircraft carrying Pakistan President Farooq Ahmad Leghari made an emergency landing at the northern Australian city of Darwin Monday night after one of its engines exploded, an airport official said Tuesday. The Boeing 707 aircraft had earlier stopped at Darwin to refuel en route to Pakistan after leaving Auckland, New Zealand, where the president had attended the Commonwealth Heads Of Government Meeting (CHOGM). "The aircraft was only about half an hour out of Darwin when it encountered technical problems and returned," the official told Reuters by telephone. The aircraft's port engine was extensively damaged due to an explosion believed caused by a technical fault, he said. None of the passengers or crew was injured. The president and his party, which included his wife and 70 officials, have extended their unscheduled stopover by one day in order to tour Northern Australia.

Editor of British Independent resigns

LONDON (R) — Ian Hargreaves resigned Monday as editor of the Independent, the youngest of Britain's national broadsheet newspapers. He had brought the nine-year-old paper to a new circulation peak of 300,000 this summer. Liam Healy, chairman of newspaper publishing, said: "We are all grateful to Ian for his stewardship of the title and wish him well for the future. The Independent is in good shape and we will begin immediately to seek a replacement editor to take the newspaper to the next exciting stage in its development." Mr. Hargreaves, who worked for the Financial Times and the BBC before joining the Independent, had been editor since August 1994.

100-year-old fire finally put out

BEIJING (AFP) — A fire in northwestern China that has been raging for nearly one century and consuming millions of tonnes of coal, has finally been extinguished, the China Daily said Tuesday. For the past 100 years, the Bayanghe open-cast coalfield in the far northwest region of Xinjiang has formed a fire zone of 5.9 square kilometres. Each year, the fire had expanded more than 10 metres and consumed a further 300,000 tonnes of coal, the newspaper said. The Xinjiang Coalfield Brigade started to harness the fire zone in 1992, and finally finished the task after quelling 14 "fire hills" and extinguishing 12 major fire holes.

Crawford, Kennedy Jr. lead list of dream dates

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Cindy Crawford and John F. Kennedy Jr. were the two people American men and women would most choose as their dream date, according to a poll by Newsweek magazine. Supermodel Crawford was followed by Janet Jackson and actress Pamela Anderson, while Kennedy was ahead of actors Danzel Washington and Brad Pitt. When the 775 respondents were asked who among a list of a dozen celebrities they would choose to have lunch with, Colin Powell came first, followed by actor Tom Hanks and Pope John Paul II. President Bill Clinton trailed in fourth place.

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